

THE
LIVES
OF THE
Roman POETS.

CONTAINING

A Critical and Historical Account of Them and their Writings, with large Quotations of their most celebrated Passages, as far as was necessary to compare and illustrate their several Excellencies, as well as to discover wherein they were deficient.

To which is added,

A Chronological Table, fitted to the Years before and after CHRIST, shewing the Times when they flourished and published their Works, and exhibiting the more remarkable Events coincident with them.

Together with

An INTRODUCTION concerning the Origin and Progress of POETRY in general; and an ESSAY on Dramatick POETRY in particular.

By *L. CRUSIUS*, late of St. JOHN's College,
CAMBRIDGE.

*Dulces ante omnia Musa,
Quarum sacra fero*

Virg. Georg.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

L O N D O N :

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T O . T H E

Reverend and Learned

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T H E

Lady MARGARET's Professor of Divinity

. I N T H E

UNIVERSITY of *Cambridge*,

T H E S E

L I V E S of the Roman P O E T S,

With due Respect and Gratitude,

Are humbly inscribed

By his most obliged,

And most obedient Servant,

LEWIS CRUSIUS.

TO THE

REVEREND FATHER

JOHN M. ...

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

I*F* we may believe one of the finest Wits of the Augustan Age, Poets are generally so fond of Retirement and rural Pleasures, that we are not to expect the Transactions of their Lives should furnish a busy Scene for our Entertainment.

Scriptorum Chorus omnis amat Nemos, & fugit
Urbes.

Therefore a careful Examination, and Account of their several Works, is what the Judicious Reader will probably expect, and has accordingly been attempted in the following Sheets.

And in order to set each Author's distinguishing Character in a true Light, proper Remarks and Quotations have been made. Different Writers in the same Kind, may resemble each

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other in many Respects, as the Elegiac Poets, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid; but upon a closer Inspection, we shall find each of them distinguish'd by some peculiar Excellency which characterizes his Manner.

Again, it is common to hear an Author's Character commended in general Terms for some peculiar Excellency; for Instance, the Curiosa Felicitas of Horace has been much talk'd of among the Critics; but unless we look into his Writings with some Diligence and Accuracy, we may read and admire him, without being able to shew, wherein that curious Speaker's (as Prior calls him,) happy Talent consists.

In order therefore to point out the several Beauties to the Reader, well chosen Quotations are frequently made, which fully illustrate and display the Truth of the several Observations.

Most of the Quotations have their Translations annex'd, not only for the Benefit of the English Reader, but that the Scholar likewise may observe how far Justice has been done to the Original, and where (as is too often the Case,) some Beauties have been lost in the Translation.

Where I found my Author already translated by any of our English Poets, I have transcrib'd the Passages from them; but those Latin Poets, who have either never been translated, or have been only done into English by some who seem not to have understood their Author, nor deserve the Name of Poet, for the Information of the English Reader, I have been oblig'd to attempt to render my self, in the several
Passages

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Passages I have quoted from them, having endeavour'd to give the Sense, though I am far from pretending to have preserved the Spirit of the Original.

Nec fonte labra prolui Caballino :
Nec in bicipiti somniaffe Parnasso
Memini, ut repente sic Poeta prodirem.

Let the admirable Essay on translated Verse be my Apology, which shews how difficult it is to do Justice to those great Originals, the ancient Poets. But the several Translations of Statius, distinguish'd at the End by T—rs, need no Apology ; the Publick has lately seen and approved a Miscellany of Poems Publish'd by this Gentleman, in which they have been inserted since the Publication of my first Volume.

The Order of Time has not been entirely follow'd in placing the Poets, because I thought it more convenient to give a separate Account of the Dramatick Poets, with a distinct Essay on Dramatick Poetry that is prefix'd to their Lives in the Second Volume ; in which Essay, if I have any where deviated from the commonly receiv'd Opinion concerning the Musick and Theatre of the ancient Romans, I hope I have produced good Authority for it from the Classics and Grammarians, and could produce many more upon occasion.

In the Account of the Poets, I have gone no lower than Claudian, the Western Empire falling about his Time, and the Roman Genius with it. Besides, should I venture to take in
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one or two more, so many would be found pleading as good a Title to the Preference, that there would be no knowing where to end.

The sacrificing one Author to the Reputation of another, is too weak and unfair a Way of Proceeding to deserve Imitation. But as they that are nearest to Perfection are not without some Faults, there seems to be no more Reason why the fair Critic should conceal, than be fond to expose, a Blemish. Neither Satire nor Panegyric can be the Purpose of such an Undertaking, but to shew in the most clear and distinct Manner, in what Respects the Roman Poets succeeded, and where they failed.

The short Account given of several Poets, whose Works are either chiefly or entirely lost, under the Head of Miscellaneous Poets, (besides what has been occasionally said of several of them in the Introduction to the first, and the Essay on Dramatic Poetry in the second Volume,) seemed necessary to compleat the intended View of the Rise, Progress, and Decay, of the several Species of Poetry among the Romans. Besides, several of them were Writers of too much Merit in their Time, for the Reader not to desire to have some Knowledge of them, and their Works.

The Chronological Table will also I hope be of Use, to the Young Scholar at least, to shew him in one compendious View, when the several Poets flourished; and if he is a little acquainted with the Roman History, he will with Pleasure observe, how much the Prosperity of the State contributed to the Improvement of Arts and Learning, and how constantly

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stantly the Latter suffered by the Disorders of the Former, 'till at length they fell together, involved in one common Ruin; so true is Martial's Observation,

Sint Mecænates, non deerunt, Flacce, Marones.

Had I consulted my own Vanity, I might easily have made a greater Shew of Learning, by quoting the laborious Works of many learned Compilers in this Sort of Critical Learning. But as my Design was the Improvement of Youth, and the Entertainment of others, I have carefully avoided all such minute Enquiries, and critical Niceties, as the last Age seemed overfond of, but have long since been condemned by the best of Judges.

*Turpe est difficiles habere nugas
Et Stultus labor ineptiarum.*

I do not here deny that I have carefully perused all that I could meet with among the most judicious Critics concerning the Roman Poets, whose Labours I am much beholden to, and have made use of them as far as they served my Design; but I must own at the same time, that I made it my chief Study to find out each Author's Manner by reading his Works, and from thence have gathered most of my Observations, both concerning their Life and Writings; being convinced of the Truth of that Saying, It is best drinking at the Fountain-Head.

Dulcius ex ipso fonte bibuntur aquæ.

T.

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To conclude ; I have found no Reason to make any considerable Alterations or Additions to this Edition. I have added the Translation of a Passage or two from Boileau in the first, and from Ovid in the second Volume, and some few Articles in the Index. This is printed from the Quarto Edition, carefully revised ; and upon Perusal, I have found but few Errors, and those merely Typographical, which the Reader is desired to excuse and correct, by the Errata's at the End of this Volume.



T H E



THE INTRODUCTION.

SECT. I.

Of the Origin of POETRY in general.



HOWEVER strange it may seem at first sight, it is an observation founded on experience, that the noblest inventions and productions, even arts and sciences, owe their beginning to the caprice, passion, and various humours of men.

IN the first ages man had not yet refin'd upon nature, but contented himself in the pursuit of such pleasures as that inclin'd him to, and opportunity pointed out to him: But when the world was increas'd in the number of its inhabitants, and millions were combin'd into one body politic; it seem'd impossible to make them all subsist agreeably together, in the various combinations of different circumstances and conditions, without such inventions as might contribute to the support of some, and the entertainment of others.

THE mind of man soon forsakes the simple paths of virtue, when in the midst of plenty; and possess'd of power; and even where it has not degenerated into vice, must be fed with variety of amusements, to satisfy its many craving appetites, strong passions, affections, and inclinations.

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WE have the sanction of holy writ to confirm this Truth. There we find that the sons of men, before they had entirely set their hearts to the commission of evil, had succeeded in many curious inventions, as well for the conveniences as ornaments of life.

TO this disposition of human nature, Poetry no doubt ow'd her rise; and the ruder Essays of it were probably as early as those of any other art: For wise men observing how far that which touches our passions, and moves our affections, prevails above the voice of naked truth and reason, and consulting the good and happiness of mankind, were desirous to make our very imperfections contribute to our improvement: They therefore artfully blended truth with fiction, gilding the bitter pill of instruction to make it go down the better.

THUS the oldest Poems extant in any language, are pieces of morality, historical accounts of the actions of great and famous men, or the praises of the Gods. Such were *Linus* and *Orpheus's* works; and perhaps *Amphion's* Music might be only the sweetness of his numbers that convey'd those excellent precepts that civiliz'd the savage temper of his countrymen, and so, in a moral sense, built the walls of *Thebes*.

THIS method meeting with success, in time the rough draughts, and rude beginnings of this art, were branch'd out into many distinct orders, and Poetry divided into several kinds: Yet still when the world was civiliz'd, and mens manners polish'd and refin'd, such as dealt most with the passions affecting the mind more deeply, were most admir'd and encourag'd.

TRAGEDY, and Comedy, being assisted by action and declamation, have in this respect a great advantage over narrative Poetry, and therefore best succeeded in this design, and with due regulation were better fitted to give instruction; as is shewn at large in the *Introduction* to Dramatic Poets.

THE Epic is next; which, tho' nobler in it self, as borrowing nothing from action, yet as it is more difficult being of a more intricate composition, has on this account been seldomer attempted, and generally with less success.

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IT is a question indeed, whether *Homer's* success herein among the *Greeks*, has not deterr'd more from writing after him, than it has encourag'd to follow him, tho' he had so nobly led the way, and *Aristotle*, from his writings, so finely drawn a plan of such a work; most writers of this kind contenting themselves to take some historical subject, and give it such embellishments as might be consistent with the truth of matter of fact. Besides, the use and entertainment such a work would afford, is more obvious than that of a regular Epic Poem. And we may add, that such an undertaking requir'd a much less genius and application in him that set about it, than the Epic did.

THE other kinds of Poetry being more easily compos'd, have in most civiliz'd countries found employment for persons of wit and genius.

S E C T. II.

An historical enquiry into the rise, progress, and decay of P O E T R Y among the Romans.

IT is a common, and generally a true observation, that with kingdoms and states, arts likewise flourish and decay. Being the happy product of ease and leisure, they are nurs'd and maintain'd by peace and plenty, and destroy'd by their contraries, war and necessity: For tho' the latter may be call'd the mother of invention, with respect to the politer arts, it can only be so in any considerable degree, where the greatness of the reward can answer the difficulties to be undergone in the pursuit of them, and an ample recompence is known to be the certain consequence of every considerable improvement therein. Improvements indeed of most kinds, are useless in a poor state; because all those are superfluous, that are not immediately and directly conducive to its support and preservation, or capable of contributing to its advancement. Thus all states in their infancy are strange s to

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polite learning; and *Rome* had little acquaintance with the sciences for the first five hundred years. But it is not enough that the state be rich and powerful; if the several individual members of it are not so, arts will make but slow advances there, and being a tender and delicate plant, will sicken and die for want of kind culture and nourishment. This was the fate of the *Affyrian* and *Per-sian* empire, and at length prov'd that of the *Roman*.

POETRY, above all, demanding the greatest tranquillity of mind, and freedom of thought, rarely thrives but in the arms of (at least apparent) liberty and peace.

THUS anciently *Greece* and *Rome* gave birth to so many noble genius's, whose immortal writings are a standing monument of their country's glory.

HORACE, speaking of the beginning of learning among the *Greeks*, is of this opinion.

*Ut primum positis nugari Gracia bellis
Cœpit, & in vitium fortuna labier aqua,
Nunc Athletarum studiis, nunc arsit equorum:
Marmoris aut eboris fabros aut aris amavit:
Suspendit picta vultum mentemque tabella:
Nunc Tibicinibus, nunc est garvsa Tragœdis:
Sub nutrice puella velut si luderet infans,
Quod cupide petiit, mature plena reliquit.
Quid placet aut odio est, quod non mutabile credas?
Hoc paces habuere bonæ, ventique secundi.*

When wars were done, and *Greece* dissolv'd in peace;
When fortune taught them how to live at ease;
They wrestled, painted, sung, these arts they lov'd,
These did they much admire, these they improv'd.
In ev'ry picture vulgar eyes cou'd find
The face exact, and almost saw the mind:
Then racing, vaulting then, the plays and stage,
Each took their turn to please the wanton age:
Like boys at nurse they eagerly desir'd,
But streight were cloy'd, and left what they admir'd.
For what disgusts our fancies, what does please,
But may be chang'd? These are the fruits of ease,
This happy fortune bears, this springs from peace.

CREECH.

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And *Juvenal* has the following passage, which will strongly justify the truth of our assertion.

*Sed Vatem egregium, cui non sit publica vena,
Qui nihil expositum soleat deducere, nec qui
Communi feriat carmen triviale moneta;
Hunc, qualem nequeo monstrare, & sentio tantum,
Anxietate carens animus facit, omnis acerbi
Impatiens, cupidus sylvarum, aptusque bibendis
Fontibus Æonidum, neque enim cantare sub antro
Pierio, Thyrsumve potest contingere mœsta
Paupertas, atque aris inops, quo nocte dieque
Corpus eget; satur est cum dicit Horatius ohe! Sat. VII.*

But he whose noble genius is allow'd,
Who with stretch'd pinions soars above the croud,
Who mighty thought can cloath with manly dress,
He, whom I fancy, but can ne'er express;
Such, such a wit, tho' rarely to be found,
Must be secure from want, if not abound.
Nice is his make; impatient of the war,
Abhorring business, and abhorring care;
He must have groves, and lovely fountains chuse,
And easy solitudes to bait his muse;
Unvex'd with thought of wants which may betide,
Or for to-morrow's dinner to provide.
Horace ne'er wrote but with a rosy cheek,
His belly pamper'd, and his sides were sleek. DRYDEN.

HOWEVER it must be granted at the same time, there are some great instances to the contrary of particular genius's, who, in spite of a narrow fortune, and their living in troublesome times, have attained the greatest heights: For instance, *Homer*, *Hesiod*, and *Pindar* among the *Greeks*; and *Spencer* and *Milton* among us. But these exceptions ought not to destroy a general truth, and more particularly with regard to the *Romans*, since it can hardly be questioned, but those great men above mention'd had exceeded their present performances, if they had met with those advantages that naturally flow from peace and plenty.

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AND tho' the golden age of learning was that of *Alexander* with the *Greeks*, and *Augustus* among the *Romans*, when both *Athens* and *Rome* had well nigh, if not quite, lost their liberties; yet tyranny we find has been always fatal to it; and *Nero's* Reign was as much inferiour to that of *Augustus* in learning, as in good government.

BUT we may now begin to enquire when the *Romans* first discover'd a taste for arts and learning. And we cannot meet with a fuller account of this matter, than that *Cicero* has given us in his *Tusculan* questions.

GREECE, says the Orator, excell'd us in every branch of learning and knowledge; and indeed it was an easy matter for them to outdo us herein, who had no regard for them. For whereas Poetry among the *Greeks* is of great antiquity, since both *Homer* and *Hesiod* liv'd before the building of *Rome*, and *Archilochus* in *Romulus's* reign: Poetry appear'd very late among us: And it was upwards of five hundred years from the building of the city, in the consulship of *Caius Claudius*, and *Marcus Tuditanus*, (the year before *Ennius* was born, who was older than *Plautus* or *Nevius*) that *Livius Andronicus* represented his first piece upon the Stage: Though *Cato* in his *Origines* informs us, that long before it was customary at their feasts, to sing certain compositions or hymns set to the flute in praise of Heroes. Thus far *Cicero*. But besides these hymns, before *Livius Andronicus*, the *Romans* had their *Fescennine Verses*, so call'd from a town of that name in *Campania*. They were a kind of *Impromptu's*, and made up of low wit and scurrilous jests, such as the ignorant clowns and common people may be imagin'd capable of making, at their feasts, upon getting in their harvest. For this was the principal time when they were us'd, tho' afterwards they made a part in all their publick diversions, and especially at their weddings. Our country wakes may serve to give us the nearest idea of them, which together with *Horace's* description of this merriment, will make the thing pretty clear.

*Agricola prisce, fortes, parvoque beati,
Condita post frumenta, levantes tempore festo*

Corpus,

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*Corpus, & ipsum animum spe finis dura ferentem,
Cum sociis operum, & pueris, & conjugis fida,
Tellurem Porco; Sylvanum lacte piabant;
Floribus & vino genium memorem brevis avi.
Fescennina per hunc inventa licentia morem
Versibus alternis opprobria rustica fudit.*

HOR. Ep. l. 2. Ep. I. V. 139.

The ancient swains, those happy temp'rate swains,
Contented sov'reigns of their little plains,
When all their corn was hous'd, wou'd make a feast,
Unbend their minds, and lay them down to rest;
Their cares dissolv'd into a happier thought,
And minds enjoy'd the rest their labours sought.
A pig on *Tellus*, altars left his blood,
And milk from large brown bowls to *Sylvan* flow'd.
Their wife, their neighbours, and their prattling boys,
Were call'd, all tasted of the country joys:
They drank, they danc'd, they sang, made wanton sport,
Enjoy'd their selves; for life they knew was short.
Hence grew the liberty of the looser muse,
Hence they grew scurrilous and wou'd abuse;
Hence those loose dialogues at marriage feasts,
Yet still they were but mirth, and country jests. CREECH.

From them afterwards, any loose satirical pieces were call'd Fescennine verses; and we find some of this name in *Claudian*: Those being ever after particularly so nam'd, that were compos'd on the marry'd couple.

BESIDES these Fescennine verses, the *Romans* had a barbarous kind of Poetry among them, call'd *Versus Saturnii*, Saturnian verses; the very name being a proof of their Antiquity. They were a sort of irregular Iambics, and said to have been anciently made use of by *Faunus* and the prophets, that deliver'd their oracles in this measure. This we learn from a fragment of *Emmian's*, where he alludes to a poem, that his predecessor *Navius* had compos'd in this Saturnian verse on the Punic war.

— *Scriptere alii rem*

*Versibus, quos olim Fauni Vatesque canebant,
Cum neque Musarum scopulos quisquam superarat.*

B 4.

And

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AND this measure doubtless, was the old measure long in use among the *Latins* before the building of *Rome*: For the *Romans* seem to have known nothing of the Heroic or Hexameter, 'till *Ennius* introduc'd it amongst them from the *Greeks*, who were the inventors of it. *Pliny*, the naturalist, *l. 7. c. 57.* ascribes the invention of this measure to the Oracle of *Apollo* at *Delphi*: and *Isidore*, *l. 1. Origin. c. 38.* says, That the Heroic verse before *Homer's* time was call'd *Pythian*, because that oracle deliver'd its answers in that measure. Yet some, with *Antipater* the *Greek* Epigrammatist, gave *Orpheus* the honour of having invented this measure. *l. 3. Anthol. p. 388.*

THUS far we seem to have trac'd out the beginnings of the three principal kinds of Narrative Poetry.

FROM those poems sung to the flute, in praise of great men's virtues at their feasts, we may derive that of Lyric Poetry.

FROM the *Saturnian* verses, in which the oracles us'd to be deliver'd among the ancient *Latins*, and *Nævius* who had compos'd an hiltorical poem of the punic war, we may deduce that of the Epic.

AND from the *Fescennine* verses, full of witty invectives and merry gibes, that of Satire.

I DO not here pretend to deny, that their improvement and perfection was chiefly owing to a careful perusal and imitation of the *Greek* Poets, especially their Epic and Lyric Poetry: For Satire borrow'd nothing but its measure from the *Greeks*, the plan of the Poem, as well as the name, being entirely *Roman*, as will be shown at large in the lives of *Juvenal* and *Horace*.

THE reason why the *Romans* were so many ages unacquainted with the liberal arts and sciences, was not because they wanted genius for them, but was altogether owing to the fundamental principles of their government and religion, which made the love of their country, the standing rule of every private man's actions. This made them neglect all other studies but that of their laws, and a skill in military affairs, as useless, nay even dangerous to the publick weal. For the wisest men among them, soon foresaw, that the *Greeks* with their learning, would also introduce their manners, which were very opposite to that

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that moderation and frugality, which were the two grand pillars by which their Empire was to be supported, as it had been rais'd by them.

THEREFORE for some time, learned men and philosophers, were forbid the city; and the Senate would not hear the ambassadors from *Athens*, fearing by their art, and the force of their eloquence, the truth should be so disguis'd, as might pervert them in their judgment. Thus they continu'd to treat the *Greeks* with contempt; and even in *Cato's* time, when some great men had begun to give some countenance and encouragement to letters, the Censor inveigh'd against them, saying he could no longer endure the city turn'd *Greek*. Indeed in many respects, what the *Greeks* look'd upon as the most requisite accomplishments to a gentleman, such as Musick, Painting, Singing, Dancing, Acting on the stage, &c. the *Romans* counted mean and dishonourable, and what even long afterwards they chose to have their slaves instructed in, rather than their children. (See the Preface to *Corn. Nepos*.)

AND *Cicero* very justly ascrib'd the slow progress his countrymen made in learning, to this unjust, tho' not unpollitick, contempt of the politer arts. To this we may add the testimony of *Virgil*, who knew as well as any man the aspiring genius of his fellow citizens; and he has accordingly left other sciences for the rest of the world, and only complimented the *Romans* on their political knowledge and improvements.

*Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra,
Credo equidem; vivos ducunt de marmore vultus;
Orabunt causas melius; coelique meatus
Describent radio, & surgentia sidera dicent,
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento;
Hæ tibi erunt artes: Pacique imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis, & debellare superbos.* L. VI. *Æneid*.

Let others better mould the running mass
Of metals, and inform the breathing brass;
And soften into flesh a marble face.
Plead better at the bar, describe the skies,
And when the stars descend and when they rise.

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But, *Rome*, 'tis thine alone, with awful sway
To rule mankind; and make the world obey;
Disposing peace and war thy own majestick way.
To tame the proud, the fetter'd slave to free;
These are imperial arts, and worthy thee.

DRYDEN.

BUT indeed the *Romans* made no considerable step towards introducing learning among them, 'till after the first Punic war, when some of their writers propos'd the best wits of *Greece* for their model.

*Serius enim Græcis admovit acumina Chartis,
Et post Punica bella quietus, querere cœpit,
Quid Sophocles, & Thespis, & Æschylus utile ferrent.*

HOR. Ep. Lib. II. Ep. 1. v. 162.

'Twas long before *Rome* read the *Grecian* plays,
For cares took up her nights, and wars her days;
'Till *Carthage* vanquish'd, she grew soft in peace,
And then enquir'd what weighty *Sophocles*,
What *Æschylus*, what *Thespis* taught the age,
What good, what profit did commend the stage. CREECH.

And from a fragment of *Porcius Licinius* an old Poet, we are told expressly, that it was not 'till in the time of the second Punic war, that Poetry began to flourish at *Rome*.

*Punico bello secundo Musa pennato gradu
Intulit se in bellicosam Romuli gentem.*

Yet *Horace*, with good reason, seems to defer their first remarkable improvements in Poetry, to the conquest of *Greece*.

*Grecia capta ferum victorem cepit, & artes
Intulit agresti Latio: sic horridus ille
Defluxit numerus Saturnius, & grave virus
Munditia pepulere; sed in longum tamen Ævum
Manferunt, hodieque manent Vestigia Ruris.* Ib. v. 156.

Greece

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Greece conquer'd did the conqueror o'ercome;
Polish'd the rude, and sent her arts to Rome;
The former roughness flow'd in smoother rhimes,
And good facetious humour pleas'd the times.
Yet they continu'd long, and still we find
Some little marks of the old rustick mind,
Some of the scurr'ulous humour left behind. CREECH.

I pass over the consideration of dramatick Poetry, having treated of it particularly in the *Introduction* to the *Second Volume*.

LIVIVS *Andronicus* was the father both of that, and the Narrative Poetry among the *Romans*. For besides his plays, the first of which he brought upon the stage the year of *Rome* 514, about 240 years before *Christ*; he wrote a Poem in twenty two books, concerning the great actions of the *Roman* people. He was a foreigner by extraction, and had his name of *Livius*, from the famous *Livius Salinator*, whose slave he had been, who was one of the principal persons of the age. That he was the first Poet among the *Romans* of any note, we have from the authority of *Cicero* above quoted, and *Livy* the historian, in the beginning of the seventh book of the second decad. And *Quintilian* expressly assures us, *L. X. Cap. 2. Nil in poetis supra Livium Andronicum*; We had no Poets before *Livius Andronicus*, that is, none worth mentioning, or of any distinction.

YET such was the improvement made in the *Roman* versification, that in *Cicero's* time, *Livius* was hardly thought worth reading by the best judges; and *Horace* does not commend his master *Orbilius* for reading this author in school; but thence takes an occasion to censure that extravagant fondness and regard many paid to *Andronicus's* works.

*Non equidem insector, delendaque Carmina Livii
Esse reor, memini qua plagosum mihi parvo
Orbiliū dictare: sed emendata videri,
Pulcraque, & exactis minimum distantia, miror.
Inter qua verbum emicuit si forte decorum, &
Si versus paulo concinnior unus & alter,
Injuste totum ducit venditque Poema.*

Ibid.

I do

xii *The* I N T R O D U C T I O N.

I do not damn old *Livy's* rhimes as dull,
For which I often smarted when at school:
But that he should be thought correct, sublime,
And far before the Poets of our time;
That one poor chance good line or two at most,
The only thing that all his books can boast,
Not only should atone for what's amiss,
But recommend the whole; — I'm vex'd at this.

CREECH.

Ennius, who succeeded him, was born the year of *Rome* D^{xv}; and with the assistance of a great genius, and the imitation of the best *Greek* Poets, among whom he principally profess'd to follow *Homer*, made a considerable progress in his art; and very much improv'd it. There are yet extant, many fragments of his plays and poems, some of which are very deservedly esteem'd. The most famous was his annals of the Punic war; besides which, he wrote a kind of an heroick poem, or rather panegyrick, of *Scipio Africanus*, of which I shall quote the following lines, as no small proof of the loftiness of his genius. It seems to be a description of the dead of night, which he has represented in a very sublime manner.

*Mundus Cœli vastus constitit Silentio,
Et Neptunus sævus undis asperis pausam dedit,
Sol equis iter repressit ungulis volantibus,
Constitere amnes perennes, arbores vento vacant.*

He was the first that made Satire a regular poem, and separated it from the stage, to which it had belong'd for C^l. years before. He wrote near forty plays, and not thinking it sufficient to excel in every kind of Poetry, translated from the *Greek*, *Euhemerus's* history of the Gods. But with all his merit, *Lucilius*, and *Horace* after him, found good reason to blame many things in him, and particularly his versification: These two lines are a flagrant witness of his negligence, or rather affectation in this point.

*O Tite, tute Tati, tibi tanta, Tyranne, tulisti.
At suba terribili sonitu Taratantara dixit.*

HQW

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However, in general, his merit was so extraordinary, that, notwithstanding *Caro's* opposition, he was favourably entertain'd by some of the greatest men in the commonwealth. The elder *Scipio* was the *Mecænas* of that age, and his patron and friend in particular; and the consul *Fulvius Nobilior* was so delighted with his conversation, that he took him along with him, when he went upon his expedition into *Greece* against the *Ætolians*. Nay, so much did this excellent Poet grow in the esteem of all, that at last, the *Censor* himself, the severe *Caro*, admitted him so far into his familiarity, that he made him his companion during his prætorship in *Sardinia*; and *Corn. Nepos* who has given this account, adds, That this action gain'd that great man as much honour and glory, as his *Sardinian* triumph.

AND notwithstanding *Ennius* fell short of perfection in his art, *Lucretius* allows him to have been the first writer among the *Romans* that courted the *Muses* with any considerable success.

——— *Primus amœno*
Detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam,
Per gentes Italas hominum qua clara clueret. Lib. II.

LUCRETIVS, speaking of this Poet in another place, is thought to have quoted some lines from him.

Esse præterea tamen esse Achærusia Templâ
Ennius Æternis exponit versibus esse :
" Quo neque permanant anima, neque corpora nostra.
" Sed quadam simulacra modis pallentia miris.
Unde sibi exortam semper florentis Homeri
Commemorat speciem, Lachrimas & suadere falsas
Coepisse, & rerum naturam expandere dictis. Lib. I.

BUT *Macrobius* in *Lib. VI. Cap. I.* says they are none of his. Be that as it will, it is a farther commendation of *Ennius*, and takes notice of a circumstance which *Ennius* was very fond of having believ'd: For he pretended to have seen *Homer* in a vision, who explain'd the nature of things to him; nay, he would have persuaded his country,

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countrymen, that *Homer's* genius had, according to the *Pythagorean* system, reviv'd in him : And 'tis in allusion to this circumstance, that *Horace*, censuring the ancient Poets for their careless stile and bad versification, thus speaks of *Ennius*.

*Ennius, & sapiens, & fortis, & alter Homerus,
Ut Critici dicunt, leviter curare videtur
Quo promissa cadant, & somnia Pythagorea.*

Hor. Ep. Lib. II. Ep. I.

Ennius, the lofty *Ennius* and the wise,
That second *Homer* in our Critics eyes ;
Is loose in's poems, and correct in few,
Nor takes he care to prove his dreams were true :
He shews so little of great *Homer's* soul. CREECH.

BUT *Quintilian* judges more favourably of him, and compares his writings to those sacred groves, which justly have the stamp of veneration affixed to them on account of their antiquity, rather than their beauty, which is past. *A. Gellius* defends the roughness of his verse, and *Macrobius* asserts it to have been more the fault of the times, than the Poet's. And indeed, it was a long while before the *Romans* could be brought to relish that smoothness and pleasing harmony of numbers, which succeeding Poets endeavour'd to introduce into their stile. *Horace* therefore, desirous to confirm his countrymen in that good taste, which flourish'd among the better sort in his time, was forc'd to this end to bear very hard, in many parts of his critical works, upon these defects of the ancient writers ; not so much to blame them, who he knew in a great measure brought their excuse along with them, as to bring the *Romans* off from that fondness they discover'd for every thing that was old.

*Indignor quidquam reprehendi, non quia crasse
Compositum, illepidè putatur, sed quia nuper ;
Nec veniam antiquis, sed honorem & premia posci.* HOR. Ib.

I hate

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I hate a fop should scorn a faultless page,
Because 'tis new, not yet approv'd by age;
And then admiring all the ancient lays,
Not only pardon their defects, but praise. CREECH.

NAY, to such a height had they carried this passion for antiquity, that as the same Critic and Poet informs us, the Romans had the works of *Navius* by heart. He was older than *Ennius*, and, besides some tragedies and comedies, wrote a poem, as has been observ'd, in the old *Saturnian* verse. He was of *Campania*, and serv'd in the *Punic* war, and had a great deal of learning. *Cicero* accuses *Ennius* of taking many things from him. This *Navius* is said once to have lampoon'd some of the nobility, for which he was imprison'd by the *Triumvirs*; but making a very ingenious palinody or recantation, was soon set at liberty. But we shall speak of him more at large, when we come to treat of the *Roman* stage. *Horace's* lines about him, are these.

Navius in manibus non est, & mentibus hæret
Pane recens; adeo sanctum est vetus omne Poema. Ib.

Navius is learn'd by heart, and dearly sold;
So sacred is his book, because 'tis old. CREECH.

LUCIUS, who succeeded *Ennius*, made a farther progress in the reformation the other had begun of the *Roman* poetry; but even he was deficient in many points, and extravagant in others. *Horace* accordingly has not fail'd to censure him on that account; and excuses the liberty he took in doing so to one, who was his master in *Satire*, by that which *Lucilius* himself had taken to find fault with *Ennius*.

Non ridet versus Ennii gravitate minores
Cum de se loquitur, non ut majore reprehensus?
Quid vetat & nosmet Lucili scripta legentes
Quarere num illius, num rerum dura negarit
Versiculos natura magis factos & euntes
Mollius? ———

Sat. Lib. Sat. X.
Doth.

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Doth not *Lucilius Accius*' rhimes accuse,
And blame our *Ennius*'s correcter muse?
For too much lightness oft his rhimes deride,
And when he talks of his own verses for pride:
Then, what's the reason, that his friend repines,
That when I read *Lucilius*, looser lines;
I try if 'tis his subject won't permit
More even verse, or if 'tis want of wit. CREECH.

LUCILIUS's stile was heavy and full of words, as appears from the same Satire, where the contrary is recommended as requisite to the forming a good stile.

*Est brevitæ opus, ut currat sententia, non se
Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures.* Idem. ibid.

He must be short, nor must he clog his sense
With useless words, or make his periods long;
They must be smooth, and so glide o'er the tongue. Creech.

LUCILIUS is farther charg'd with being over hasty and negligent in his compositions.

*Garrulus, atque piger scribendi ferre laborem;
Scribendi recte, nam ut multum nil moror—* Id. ibid.

Was rude and incorrect in all he writ.
This was his fault, he hastily wou'd rhyme. CREECH.

THE following lines of his are an example of it.

*Quæis hunc currere equum nos atque equitare videmus.
Hic equitat curritque, oculis equitare videmus:
Ergo oculis equitat. ——— And again,
Verum hac ludis ibi susque omnia deque fuerunt,
Susque & deque fuerunt, inquam, omnia ludus jocusque.*

I shall give but one instance more, of a sentence *Horace* would have express'd in four words.

Nam

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*Nam si quod satis est homini, id satis esse potestet,
Hoc sat erat. Nunc quum hoc non est, credimus porro
Divitias ullas animum mi explere potesse?*

This is what *Augustus* called *molestæ scribere*, to write tediously. *Horace* therefore in gratifying his own good taste, by condemning this style of *Lucilius's*, pleas'd his prince's at the same time.

BESIDES these faults, *Lucilius* had a particular affectation of mixing Greek words with the Latin, which, absurd as it was, found many admirers. This oblig'd that excellent writer to condemn him for it, and ridicule so absurd a mixture. Nevertheless, he readily grants, that he not only exceeded *Ennius*, and those that preceeded him in his art, but would have been correct himself, had he lived to the *Augustan Age*.

— *Fuerit Lucilius inquam
Comis, & urbanus, fuerit limatior idem
Quam rudis & Græcis intacti carminis auctor,*
Quamque poetarum seniorum turba; sed ille,
Si foret hoc nostrum fato delatus in ævum,
Detereret sibi multa: recideret omne quod ultra
Perfectum traheretur: & in versu faciendo
Sape caput scaberet, viros & roderet ungues.*
Sat. Lib. I. Sat. 10.

Well then, suppose *Lucilius* was a Wit,
His virtues more than faults in what he writ,
Correcter than the elder writers own,
And him *, to whom we satire owe alone :
Satire, a poem to the Greeks unknown.
Yet did he now again new life commence,
He would retrench, he would correct his sense,
And pare off all that was not excellence ;
Take pains; and often, when he verses made,
Wou'd bite his nails to th' quick, and scratch his head.

CREECH.

LUCRETIVUS and *Catullus*, that came after him,
brought the language little short of perfection; especially
the

* *Ennius*.

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the former, whose style always flows in a pure stream, and his verses often recommend themselves by a beautiful harmony of numbers. Even *Virgil* wanted all his correctness and elegance of expression, to excel him in his more finish'd parts; as will easily appear to the reader, if he compares *Lucretius's* description of the plague, in his last book, with that of *Virgil's* in the second *Georgic*. *Propertius* and *Tibullus*, though they wrote in somewhat a politer and more courtly style, especially the latter, yet doing it in Elegiac verse, they did not, nor could much contribute to the forming that majesty of numbers, and dignity of expression, which *Lucretius* had begun, and *Virgil* perfected. Though we find mention of some other excellent poets interveining or contemporary with him: Such were *Varius*, *Tucca*, *Valgius*, *Rabirius*, *Ponticus*, *Bassus*, &c. but as we have scarce any fragments of any of their works, we can form no tolerable judgment about them, farther than what we can learn from *Horace* and *Ovid*. From what they have said of them, we may conclude in general, that *Varius* and *Rabirius*, in particular, might perhaps more justly challenge the next place to *Virgil* and *Horace*, than those that are now in possession of it. *Gallus*, and *Albinovanus*, and *Cassius Parmensis*, were very excellent Poets in the elegiac way, and perhaps not inferior to *Ovid* or *Tibullus* therein. The Elegies that gounder *Gallus's* name, seem to be spurious, and are judged to be so, by many of the best Critics.

OVID had a genius capable of reaching the greatest heights in Poetry; but his love of pleasure, and a natural indolence of temper, generally makes him amuse himself in the pleasant walks about the middle of *Parnassus*, where, led by his fancy, he sometimes wanders so much out of his way, that you will find him almost at the foot of the hill. This is *Strada's* judgment in his prologues. From him we proceed to *Horace* and *Virgil*, though this be interrupting the order of time, since they both preceeded him. But I choose to place him here, because I think he has best fill'd up the chasm between *Lucretius* and *Virgil*.

VIRGIL and *Horace* were both great masters, but in a different way. They seem to be equally correct and elegant; but if I may venture to give my opinion in so
nice

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nice a point, not *Virgil's* genius, though he is more universally excellent, and therefore the greater Poet, can attain to *Horace's* unparallel'd happiness of expression in some places, nor the brightness and sublimity of his sentiments. *Virgil's* dress is perfectly just and proper, but grave and modest, though magnificent and majestic. *Horace's* sometimes is the most rich and surprizingly magnificent, yet still well fancied and perfectly elegant. They had both great masters to follow among the Greeks: But *Virgil* had the advantage of a *Lucretius* among his countrymen, and *Horace* none that we know of; except you will say *Catullus*, whose *Odes* are for the greater part so mean, that no one would ever wrong his judgment so much, as to think *Horace* was much beholden to them for any thing in his own; unless perhaps some of his Epodes, which are of a very different character from the generality of his *Odes*, and scarce worthy their author.

WE are here arriv'd to that period of time which was the crisis of the Roman greatness; when *Augustus*, being left after the battle of *Actium*, and the reduction of *Ægypt*, sole and peaceable master of the world, applied himself to polish and civilize the minds of his warlike *Romans*, and make those conquerors of nations as famous for their learning and good manners, as they had been for their arms.

THE politer arts met with so much the more encouragement from him, as he was himself a person of much wit and learning; being both a good Poet and a fine Orator, as well as a wise and politic prince.

IT was under his influence and direction, that *Virgil* and *Horace* labour'd so successfully in bringing about this great design. That prince set up an Academy in the temple of *Apollo* for this purpose, where the several works of writers were examin'd; and if they stood the test, the judges whom *Augustus* had appointed, decreed them publick honours and rewards, which were confered upon them in proportion to their deserts.

So that this wise Emperor had the satisfaction to see a people that had spent an age in civil broils, and been as it were inur'd to bloodshed, in a few years brought to relish
the

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the more amiable arts of peace ; and for the sword and the spear, take up with the style and the plough-share.

VIRGIL's eloquence convinc'd them of the charms and advantages they would find in cultivating their minds and lands ; and *Horace*'s wit madethem sensible of the happiness they would enjoy, when every man could sit and taste the comfortable fruits of his labour under his own vine ; and that *Greece* was but imperfectly conquer'd, if they did not make themselves masters of that people's knowledge as well as their country, and transplant the seed into their own soil, where, if duly cultivated, for which he gave them infallible directions, it would produce as good fruit.

BUT upon *Augustus*'s decease the Muses began to be neglected. His successors studying to gratify their own monstrous appetites, and satiate their thirst of wealth and blood, not to raise the glory, or enlarge the bounds of the *Roman* empire, which were daily diminish'd or impair'd through their neglect. The prince immediately succeeding, was all dissimulation, and the subject flattery ; and finding want of merit to be the best recommendation, they vied with each other in this dishonourable contention. Such was the state of things under *Tiberius*. After him the princes play'd the tyrant and monster more openly ; and all arts being now grown useless, lay buried in obscurity and contempt. Such were *Caligula*, *Claudius*, and *Nero*. *Claudius*, through his weakness and stupidity, suffering that to be done by his wives and favourites, which made his reign as odious and fatal, as those of the other two.

IN this sad interval *Lucan* and *Persius* wrote, and endeavour'd to regain that credit their art had lost. *Persius* knew no better way of doing it, than by exposing the affectation and bombast that corrupted the style of the writers of his time ; and to strike the deeper, spared not *Nero* himself, who was as bad a poet, actor, and musician, as he was a prince. Yet, notwithstanding all his endeavours, the style of this Satirist is so harsh and rugged, so figurative and obscure, that it must be own'd he has but poorly copied *Horace*, whom he profess'd to follow. *Lucan*, in the incorrect state his early death left the greater

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part of his writings, is generally rough and boisterous, not to say sometimes unpoetical.

THUS the language, with the state, continually decay'd. Under *Trajan's* more auspicious reign the Muses again try'd to raise their drooping heads. Even under *Domitian*, who at least wou'd encourage the ingenious flatterer, *Statius* began to endeavour at better success than *Lucan* had met with, and in order to this, made *Virgil* his pattern, but out of too great an ambition to rival him in his diction, has overshot the mark; and tho' his numbers are always sounding, his language is sometimes stiff, and his style forced and unnatural. *Silius Italicus*, who came after him, is smother and more natural, but wants his loftiness and spirit; and whilst we discover the nobleman and orator in *Silius's* easy eloquence, we find the greater poet in *Statius's* sublime.

JUVENAL, under *Trajan*, added all the dignity of numbers to the wittiest and most biting Satire. Yet even in this age, says *Quintilian*, the Roman taste was so vitiated, that many who would be thought judges, prefer'd *Lucan's* style to *Virgil's*. *χάλκεα χρυσεών.*

AFTER these and the other Poets of that age, the scene closes, and antiquity has left us nothing by which we might judge of the poetry of the intervening space of time between *Trajan* and *Valentinian*. Then *Ausonius* flourish'd; but his writings, though elegant and ingenious enough, may rather serve to shew how much poetry was decay'd among the Romans at that time, than to give us any great delight, or even a just idea of what it once had been.

FROM him, we must pass on to the Emperor *Theodosius* the Great, and *Arcadius* and *Honorius* his sons; under whom we find a bright revival of poetry in *Claudian*: And had there been found any among his contemporaries of equal genius, or the times afforded him nobler subjects, the Muses might again have appear'd with decency and credit. But as with him they seem'd to revive a while, so with him they expir'd, like the last glimmering efforts of a wasted taper, that flashes and is extinguish'd.

NOT long after him, indeed *Boethius* and *Prudentius* discover'd a tolerable vein of poetry; but as a consideration
of

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of these writers wou'd draw us beyond the period already fix'd for this work, which is the continuance of the *Roman* Empire in the West, and *Claudian* being the last of any note before that revolution, we shall conclude with his life.

Thus did poetry rise and fall with the Empire; and the same tyranny, luxury, and barbarians, that weaken'd, invaded, and overthrew the one, discourag'd, corrupted, and destroy'd the other.

S E C T. III.

Of the Versification of the Romans; and its preference to that of modern P O E T R Y.

HAVING gone through the several stages of the *Roman* Poetry, the reader may perhaps be diverted to enquire with me, Why the ancient Poetry is preferr'd by the most impartial judges to the best of our modern compositions? What is here meant, is particularly respecting the versification, or what may be call'd the mechanical part of poetry.

IN order to shew this, we are not to endeavour to set up the ancients as preferable to the moderns because of the great superiority of their genius, or any of the common topics made use of in the dispute between them; we shall find the cause in the language, which by the natural make and structure of their syllables and words, and the construction of sentences in the *Latin* tongue, was better adapted to harmony and numbers than any modern language.

THE just and regulated quantity of their vowels, the various inflexions and terminations of their words, did not a little contribute, by their tuneable variety, to furnish out great helps to the poet's art, in forming the cadence of their verses agreeable to the sense of the words, as well as sounding and pleasing to the ear.

AGAIN, their *Prosodia*, though doubtless at first reduced into rules from the constant practice of good poets, when
once

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once so regulated, was another considerable advantage they had over us.

A due mixture of equality and variety, compose what we call harmony. Now by the help of their *Prosodia*, the *Romans* did at the same time vary their cadence, and yet brought all their verses, that is, their Heroic, or Hexameter (as also their Pentameter) verses to the same proportion of time.

For example : Their Hexameter verse consisted of six feet of Spondees or Dactyls, to be used at the poet's discretion ; except that the fifth place was generally to have a Dactyl, that is a foot, or measure, consisting of one long and two short syllables ; and the sixth place should have a Spondee, or foot consisting of two long ; though a Trochee, or foot consisting of one long, and one short syllable, was also admitted. By this limitation, the poet was at liberty to employ more or fewer syllables as he pleas'd, and yet he need not alter, nay, cou'd not but keep the same measure and proportion of time. For the Spondee, of two long syllables, which is commonly mark'd, thus (- -) is equal in time, and shou'd be so pronounced, to the Dactyl, of one long, and two short, mark'd thus (- o o). So that whether the poet employ'd more Dactyls, or more Spondees, or an equal number of each, the quantity of time was still the same, tho' the cadence was almost infinitely, and consequently most agreeably varied and diversified. I shall give an instance out of *Virgil* of one verse with five Dactyls and one Spondee, and another of five Spondees and one Dactyl. The former describes the swiftness of a fine courser ;

Quadrupē dāntē fūtrēm sōnītū quātū | ungulā | cāpū.

The other expresses the slow rising of the arm when the Cyclops lift up their great hammers, and the dead sound it makes when they strike the anvil :

* *Illū inlēr sēsc māgnā vībrāchiā | tollunt.*

* The *English* reader is to observe, that when a vowel in the end of a word, comes before a vowel in the beginning of the next word, the first vowel is cut off, that is, it loses its sound.

A NO-

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ANOTHER advantage they had, was their *Casuar*, whereby cutting off the last syllable, or syllables, and joining it to that of another, to make up the feet of the verse, all the words are connected, and as it were wrought into each other, so as to make up one harmony. This is evident from the foregoing verses, as they stand barr'd off; but I shall subjoin two more from the same poet, in which the beauty of the *Casura* is more remarkable.

*Ille me|as ex|rare ho|ves ut|cernis & | ipsum
Ludere | qua vel|lem cala|mo per|misit a|gresti.*

The voice indeed in pronouncing, distinguishes each of these feet, or measures; but it does not break off in the middle of a word, tho' at the end of a foot, and therefore it joins the preceeding foot with the following. To make the beauty of this connexion more sensible, one need only shew how disagreeable the want of it is. The reader may examine the following verse, that has no *Casura* and try if he can find any harmony in it, though the quantity of the syllables and number of the feet is according to rule.

Urbem | fortem | cepit | nuper | fortior | hostis.

ANOTHER advantage of the ancients over the moderns, is the variety of their measures, answerable to the several kinds of poetry. The majestic gravity of the Hexameter agrees with the solemnity of the Epic. The softness of the Pentameter, alternatively added to the Hexameter, fits that to the sweetness of the Elegy. The Sapphic, Alcaic, and Phaleucian measures, &c. mix'd together, best suit the musical and sublime spirit of Lyric poetry; whilst the simplicity of the Iambic more nearly resembling prose, is peculiarly proper for the Stage.

THE moderns are deficient in most, or all of these respects. Our languages, the *English* in particular, has neither a determinate quantity of vowels, (we rather speaking by accent) nor a sufficient variety of inflexions and terminations: Besides, our syllables are, for the greater part, but rudely join'd together, wherein abundance of

harsh

harsh consonants are crouded on each other with few vowels to sound them, and even some of them are preposterously cut off, which has made our language, almost a language of monosyllables; so that without good care, as the Author of the *Essay on Criticism* shews, our verses run very heavily:

And ten low words oft creep in one dull line.

As to the measure of our verses, the Heroick have five feet, consisting of two syllables each; so that hereby, in spite of the Poet's Art, not only a monotony is introduced, which is aggravated by the rhyme, rather than mended; but verses of the same number of syllables, by the untowardness of our unaccountable accent, are frequently very widely different in the times of their pronunciation, inso-much that we want both the variety and equality of the ancients. Blank verse has been invented probably to obviate this monotony, by leaving out the rhyme, that fetters upon the fancy: for I cannot but imagine that the principal reason why blank verse is now only us'd in plays, is not because, if skilfully managed, it wou'd not be as agreeable to the ear as rhyme, but because the jingle of the rhyme being something musical, and our verse not having much harmony without that, it has been found too hard a matter to be able to supply the want of it by the dignity of expression, and superior harmony of numbers.

BUT it may be objected to blank verse, that though it leaves the Poet at liberty of running the sense of one verse into another, without being oblig'd to let that end with the second line, as it ought always to do, either more or less compleatly in rhyme; yet this makes it too nearly resemble prose, since it wants the support of variety of numbers, and equality of time as much as that which rhymes, the pause especially at the end of each verse being almost insensible; to distinguish which, rhyme seems to have been introduc'd. To prove the excellency of rhyme from its antiquity, is strangely absurd; all arts owing their improvement and perfection to time: And the Romans might with as much reason have asserted the superiority of the Saturnian verse to the Hexameter, because it was

of greater antiquity among them. Rhyme was certainly introduced by ignorant barbarous nations, whose manners were as unciviliz'd as their language was rude and unharmonious. Nay, such ill judges were they of harmony, that they were not content to supply the want of it by the jingle of single and double rhymes in their own languages, but also introduced them into the Latin; and this for a while so much prevailed, that the true ancient versification was lost in it, and at length quantity became almost quite neglected. But a celebrated * French writer, who was no stranger to the English tongue, has highly commended our Inventors of blank verse, which, if well supported by a fine style, and carefully varied by a good ear, as in *Milton*, he thinks much preferable to rhyme in Epick as well as Dramatick Poetry. It is frther urg'd by the advocates of our English Poetry, that it is not altogether without quantity and numbers; for that our Heroick measure is almost the same with the Iambick of the ancients. Yet granting this, which may perhaps be justly question'd, unless you substitute accent in the place of quantity, we are little the better for it; since it is evident, that the Iambic foot, which consists of a short and long syllable, has not majesty nor variety enough in its measure to suit with Heroick poetry.

WITH these advantages it is not so strange, methinks, that the Romans were better able to make their words eccho to the sense, than the moderns. It should rather seem wonderful, that so few of them, besides *Virgil* in the Heroick, *Horace* in the Lyrick, and perhaps *Tibullus*, and sometimes *Ovid*, in the Elegiac measures, have hit upon the true beauty of numbers; since it is very evident, that with much less trouble, and less constraint upon their expressions, they were able to give an harmonious and tuneable cadence to their verses. If the Romans complain'd, as *Cicero*, *Quintilian*, *Martial*, and others did, of the poverty, heaviness, and severity of their language, if compar'd to the copiousness, variety of numbers, and liberty of the Greek; what must we say? who can but be sensible, that we are in all these respects (I speak with re-

* Monsieur Huet, *Vide Huetiana*.

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lation to versification only) much more inferior to them, than for what we can find they were to the Greeks? of whom *Horace*, having made the same complaint, says,

Grajis ingenium, Grajis dedit ore rotundo

Musa loqui. ———

De Art. Poetica.

HITHERTO we have consider'd versification only with respect to the sound, or musical cadence of it. If we proceed to the disposition and structure of the expressions, as fitted and adapted to the sublime and figurative style, we shall discover our weakness to be the same, and their advantage equal.

THEIR language allow'd them, nay, it is one of its greatest beauties, to invert the natural order of words in their prose; and verse had always still greater liberties. Of how great benefit this was to the beauty of style, the admirable *Milton* was not insensible; though he has been most severely censured by *Dryden* and others, for some liberties he has taken this way in our language: Yet I am fully persuaded his style would have fallen very short of its present sublime energy, had he not been so bold.

INDEED our want of inflexions and terminations, which we are forced to supply by an abundance of uncouth particles, will very rarely admit of these freedoms, without destroying the Syntax, or rendering the sense equivocal. Nor will our construction admit of near that variety that of the ancients does. The want of this, is no where more evident than in our translations of the Poets in general, but *Virgil* and *Horace* more particularly; it being impossible not only to hit their charming and elegant structure of words, but even justly to express the full beauty of their sentiments, and preserve the strength of their figures in so poor a language as ours, or any modern language whatsoever.



S E C T. IV.

*Of the Poetry of Style ; and that it is that alone,
and good Versification, which chiefly recom-
mends the Writings of the P O E T S.*

THIS may seem a strange position : But if the Reader has attentively considered the power of numbers, as we have already pointed it out to his notice, and withal the commanding force of a noble and figurative style, imployed to support and illustrate the finest and most affecting sentiments, for which all the treasures of nature are search'd and rifled by the skilful Artist, the better to work upon our affections, and excite our passions, and at the same time reflects how much we are influenced and sway'd by those passions and affections, I doubt not but he will soon be brought to lay aside his prejudice, and confess, with me, that the generality of Readers converse with Poets much less for instruction than entertainment. I shall instance only in *Virgil*, as that may seem to make most against me.

LET the Criticks say what they please, the conduct and execution of the whole, together with the true and just proportion of the design, and the apt connexion and regular harmony of the several parts of an Epick Poem, is what few are judges of, and fewer take the pains to enquire into and examine ; and I dare affirm, that, in general, where there are no gross errors, no glaring faults to disgust us at first view in this part, that it is the beauty of versification and style that charms and delights us, and excites our admiration of the Author. We cannot better illustrate this matter, than by a short comparison of the *Georgicks* and *Aeneid*. How jejune a subject is that of the former, for the generality of Readers ? and though designedly written for the instruction of his countrymen, by *Virgil*, who can read it with that view among us ? and yet it has been the delight and admiration of persons of good taste in all ages since. What other probable reason
can

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can be assign'd for this, but the beauty of the style, and the incomparable harmony of his numbers?

BUT whilst that continues to please, as whatever is harmonious and beautiful naturally will, the *Georgicks* cannot want admirers, even to the preferring of it, how absurdly we shall see hereafter, to the *Æneid*.

IT is no news to find a man acting contrary to his judgment, when bias'd by sense and inclination. This was the case of a late writer, who has taken some pains to magnify the *Georgicks*, at the expence of the *Æneid*. The Reader will find his notions refuted in our life of *Virgil*. Here I shall only shew some of the grounds of his error, which seems principally to be drawn from this truth; that though we allow instruction to be the principal aim and design of Poetry, yet it is to be conveyed in so delightful a manner that the real end not appearing, mankind may be insensibly wrought to approve and imitate those virtues, and condemn and avoid those vices, which make up the moral of the Poem. Now a good Poet, the worse materials he employs, the more art he will use in setting them off. This was *Virgil's* misfortune in his *Georgicks*; but by the force of his genius he has so concealed the defect of his subject, as justly to render himself the object of admiration to all future ages: His *Æneid* having a nobler subject, did not require these nicer strokes of his Art in every part of it; the pomp of style, and magnificence of numbers, being improper in some places, and needless in others. For this reason, it is no wonder if the style of the *Georgicks*, in the main, seems more finish'd than that of the *Æneid*; where the Poet seems sometimes purposely to have descended from the sublime of his subject, to common and familiar comparisons, for the relief of the Reader, and perhaps his own too. Thus some great masters have affected, in their finest pieces, to darken their shades, and lessen the glaring beauties of their colouring. *Ambitiosa recidet ornamenta*, says *Horace* of a good Poet. However, from the above mention'd maxim, some, both ancients and moderns, have falsely concluded, that pleasure was the only aim of Poets. Others again, having too strict a notion of truth, have concluded, that instruction founded upon fiction, was neither of equal

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efficacy

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•fficacy nor dignity with that which is built upon truth. Were it not for delight in Poetry, say they, what Poem could pretend to an equal share of merit with an indifferent History? I shall refer the Reader for the refutation of this notion, to *Bossu* on Epick Poetry, and to the life of *Virgil*, where we have treated this point at large. The contrary, however, is evident from this one historick truth, namely, that the wise men of all ages, being convinced of this strong inclination in mankind to pleasure, have, in order to win their savage minds to virtue, and engage them to comply with the several duties of a civil life, couch'd their precepts of philosophy and religion under the veil of Poetry: For versification, according to the testimony of *Strabo*, and others among the ancients of unquestionable credit, was used long before Prose: And accordingly we find in *Greece*, that though Poetry had received its perfection under *Homer*, yet it was not till some ages after, that *Isocrates* began publickly to teach the beauties of oratory and polite writing in Prose, insomuch that the histories of the earlier times were written in Verse; which indeed imprim'd the various matters of fact more easily in their memories, and convey'd the whole more agreeably to the minds of men. Thus anciently Poets were both priests and philosophers; or, if you will, the latter invented and cultivated this art to win their fellow creatures to religion, humanity, and virtue.

PERFECTION is to be aimed at in Poetry and Painting; and *Horace*, as well as other great Criticks, allows no medium in these Arts. Of the former he expressly tells us, that being at first invented to please, if it falls never so little short of perfection, it is bad, and to be condemn'd.

— *Mediocribus esse poetis*

Non Dii, non homines, non concessere Columnæ.

And again,

Animis natum inventumque Poema juvandis

Si paulum summo decessit, vergit ad imum. Art. Poet.

Now it is evident, that according to this rule, that Poem will in general meet with the most favourable reception in the world, which has the fewest faults, and those

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those the least obvious: And thus the *Georgicks* by some came to be thought preferable to the *Æneid*. The style of each, suitably to their subjects, has as much perfection as any human composition seems capable of; and that is what is principally to be considered, as making the chief merit of the *Georgick*, and falling most under the notice of the generality of Readers, who are not so universally capable of looking into the plan, disposition, harmony of characters, and fable of an Epick Poem, like the *Æneid*; for these cannot come under the cognizance of their senses or imagination, such a knowledge, on the contrary, being the result of a judicious inquiry. Thus persons of no taste in painting, may be charm'd with the bright colouring of a landichape, and ignorantly prefer it to a fine history-piece; and *Teniers* or *Brugel* pass with them for better Painters than *Raphael* or *Le Brun*.

S E C T. V.

Whether Genius is requisite to the forming a fine Style, and how far that and Art contribute to the making a great POET; with a farther Enquiry into that Question started in the Beginning of this Discourse, Whether great Genius's want the Assistance of favourable Times, or find Means of exerting themselves in the worst?

WE had before observed, that considering the advantages they had in their language, it was a wonder no more among the *Romans* should succeed in a good style and versification. It is allowed, that the invention in Poetry requires genius, and correcting wants judgment and application; but few imagine them both necessary to form a good style. Yet that it is so, seems evident from this, that none but the greatest genius's ever succeeded so as to be masters herein. *Virgil* and *Horace* are the two greatest genius's among the *Roman* Poets, and they only attained

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tained to the perfection of style. Yet *Claudian's* genius perhaps led him to Poetry as much as *Virgil's*; but he wanted judgment. *Statius* too had his share of both, but fell short in each of these qualifications. *Claudian's* versification is always smooth and flowing, and therefore faulty; variety as well as equality being essential to true harmony. *Statius's* numbers, though varied more than *Claudian's*, are not always adapted to the subject; creeping sometimes where they should rise, and swelling where they should be low. The sentiments and expressions are in like manner faulty in the two Poets: *Claudian* is too florid, and exhausts his subject, overcharging his descriptions; *Statius* runs too much on pursuit of the sublime, which in him is commonly false, and, like a wandering light, leads him out of his way at least, if not into a bog. So that I think what *Horace* truly says of Poetry in general, may fitly be apply'd to the style and versification in particular.

— *Ego nec studium sine divite vena,
Nec rude quid prosit ingenium video.*

— *Hor. Art. Poet.*

THIS passage naturally leads me to resume the question propos'd in the former part of this Introduction, namely, *Whether Genius requires the concurrence of happy times, or whether a skilful artist will always find means of exerting himself in the worst?* Some examples I know may be brought in favour of the latter opinion, and we there instanc'd in some of the greatest Poets, both ancient and modern; yet we might possibly except against most of them, if it is asserted that they met with no encouragement when they gave proofs of their genius: Suitable I will not say it was; but where there is absolutely none at all given, be the force of the Poet's genius never so great, I say he will do little towards it's perfection. So that the reverse of this, as *Martial* maintain'd, will with more probability hold true, *That the Patron never wants a Poet.*

Sint Mecanates, non deerunt, Flacce, Marones.

Though

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Though this too taken in its full extent, is perhaps equally false; for it may justly be doubted, whether if there were many *Mecenas's*, there would be as many *Virgils*. Nature does not seem to act always with the same vigour, and there are many other causes that must co-operate to form a first-rate Genius. One necessary to this purpose, seems a flourishing State; another no less requisite, is an Age that has a taste for polite Learning. *Homer* seems a great objection to what we have here advanced; and this makes me think that he must have been preceded by several in Poetry among the *Greeks*, or he had never brought it to that perfection it now has in his works. *Aristotle*, in his *Poetics*, is of this opinion, and I think mentions some that had gone before *Homer* in his Art. Among the *Romans*, it is evident, our rule holds good, polite Learning and the Empire being in their Meridian when *Horace* and *Virgil* appeared. And we may add the same of *France*, during the late King's reign, and of *Italy*, under *Leo X.* On the other hand it is not to be denied, that though the times may not be altogether so favourable, a great Genius may push forward, and at length dispel the dark clouds that for a while obscured and concealed his merit. So true is that saying of the Poet's even in this respect,

Naturam expellas furca licet, usque recurret.

MANY have imagined Wit to be the peculiar growth of some countries, as of *Greece* in particular; all Arts being said to be the product of that happy climate. But if this were general, and in common to all *Greece*, why should *Athens* alone abound with so many Poets, Orators, Historians, and Philosophers, whilst the rest have but poorly furnished their quota? The climate of *Athens* was not peculiarly good above all others of the same country. *Sparta* for instance, situated in the most delightful province of *Greece*, on the banks of the *Eurotas*, could not be said to be inferior to the former in this respect. We must therefore look for those moral causes arising from the nature of each state, which made Arts and Learning flourish in the one, and Sobriety, Discipline, and Valour in the other.

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other. Whereas *Thebes*, though in so bad an air as to become a Proverb, — *Crasso Bæotum in ære natus*, vulgarly signifying a dull Fellow, yet had an *Amphion* and a *Pindar*, as well as a *Hercules* and a *Bacchus*; and in latter times an *Epaminondas*, who was as fine a Scholar, Gentleman, Soldier and Statesman, as any *Athens* ever boasted. And yet one would think there must be something more than ordinary, that made the *Athenians* for many years so remarkable for their Politeness and Wit, above the rest of their countrymen.

THIS seems chiefly, if not entirely, to depend on moral causes. The nature of the *Athenian* government gave great encouragement to arts and sciences: Being a democracy, eloquence consequently rais'd a Man to the greatest dignities and employments; and the Demagogues studying in all things to comply with the humour of the people, and ingratiate themselves with them, failed not to propose such laws as might divert them, at certain seasons, with shews and spectacles of all kinds. Thus Poetry and her sister Arts, being now become subservient to the administration, by contributing to the publick diversion and entertainment, could not fail to meet with proper encouragement. And when a good taste was once established among them, Learning in all its branches, daily grew more flourishing. And their Countrymen for the most part, as well as the *Romans* afterwards, instead of rivalling them herein, gave them still more encouragement to make greater improvements of all kinds, by flocking to this City for instruction, and sending their youth hither for education, rendring it thereby the publick university of the world. Thus I think it evidently appears, that moral causes have the greatest share in making arts flourish in any nation. But to pursue the point yet further; if natural causes had the greatest influence, is the climate of *Greece* so changed and altered now-a-days, that it can produce no more genius's of note? Will not the decay and ruin of Arts there be universally ascribed to the tyranny of the *Turkish* government, which keeping the *Greeks* in abject slavery, and discouraging learning even in the professors of the established religion, consequently affords not the least opportunity, much less any incite-
ment

ment to excel this way? Indeed the revival of Arts in the western world puts it beyond all doubt, that moral causes contribute most to the perfection of genius, and the progress of learning. Will any reasonable person say, it was the want of genius in all those that lived among us, from the fifth to the fifteenth century, which during this long interval, made all those Arts at a stand, and left the world to be over-run with barbarity, superstition and ignorance? Sure Nature proceeds in a more equal course, and where the necessary moral causes concur to shew them, produces in all countries, and at all times, persons endued with fine genius and excellent wits. It was the taking of *Constantinople* by the *Turks*, and the ruin of the *Grecian* Empire, that drove out of their country a Set of learned and ingenious men, who mostly resorted to *Italy*; and being there necessitated to communicate their knowledge for subsistence, dispelled those clouds that had so long darkned Mens understandings. *Leo X*, being a Prince of some learning and good parts, encouraged his countrymen to embrace the opportunity; and under his influence so great a progress was made, that in a short time, learning in all its branches was cultivated to a degree of perfection, which in some respects has not been surpassed, if equalled, by after ages. I shall conclude this ESSAY, with that beautiful passage relating to our present Subject, in the *Essay on Criticism*.

Learning and *Rome* alike in empire grew,
And Arts still follow'd where her eagles flew.
From the same foes, at last, both felt their doom,
And the same age saw *Learning* fall, and *Rome*.
With tyranny then superstition join'd,
As that the body, this enslav'd the mind;
Much was believ'd, but little understood,
And to be dull, was constru'd to be good;
A second deluge *Learning* thus o'er-ran,
And the *Monks* finish'd what the *Goths* began.

At length *Erasmus*, that great injur'd name,
(The glory of the priesthood, and the shame!)

Stemm'd

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Stemm'd the wild torrent of a barb'rous age,
And drove those holy *Vandals* off the stage.

But see! each Muse, in *Leo's* golden days,
Starts from her trance, and trims her wither'd bays !
Rome's ancient *Genius*, o'er its ruins spread,
Shakes off the dust, and rears his rev'rend head !
Then Sculpture and her sister Arts revive ;
Stones leap'd to form, and rocks began to live ;
With sweeter notes each rising temple rang ;
A *Raphael* painted, and a † *Vida* sang !

† M. Hieronymus Vida, of Cremona, an excellent Latin Poet,
who wrote an *Art of Poetry in Verse*. He flourished in the Time
of *Leo X*.



T H E



THE
L I F E
O F
L U C R E T I U S.



TITUS LUCRETII CARUS was a native of *Rome*, of the noble and antient family of the LUCRETII, though History has left us no account of his parents. He was born about twelve Years after *Cicero*, in the Consulship of *Licinius Crassus* and *Mutius Scevola* in the Year of *Rome* 656. It is highly probable, that his parents, observing the fine bent of his Genius, and the Progress he had already made under his Masters, sent him for his farther improvement, to *Athens*; where, at that time, the Epicurean philosophy was in great repute, and flourished under those great men *Zeno* and *Phadrus*, both of which *Cicero* in his philosophical writings has mentioned with honour. And we read in his epistles, that *M. Brutus* heard them, and became a follower of this Sect; which *Atticus* had done some time before, as appears from the elegant account of his Life by *Corn. Nepos*.

It is remarkable, that in this age the men of the first quality and most distinguished merit in *Rome*, gave very much into this Sect; as some did into that of the *Stoicks*,
which

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which in *Nero's* time was grown the most considerable. We may farther observe on this occasion, that controversies between those of different Sects, were carried on with vigour enough on both sides, but without animosity and bitterness: they rallied one another smartly, but gently; and were good friends, though of different opinions. And, notwithstanding our superior means of information from Scripture may justly make us despise, as well as abominate, the Epicurean Principles: those Philosophers were noble enquirers into the works of nature, free from passion and prejudice, and men of strict morals, endeavouring after happiness, by acquiring a settled tranquillity of Mind. This they imagined best attainable by a strong and rational contempt of human greatness. And it was so noble a motive that drew men of *Atticus* and *Brutus's* virtue and integrity to fall in with their opinions, and embrace their doctrines.

LUCRETIVS having thoroughly imbibed them during his stay at *Athens*, it is no wonder if we hear little of him 'till after he had been some time married; when, as some say, his wife gave him a philtre or love-potion, which failed in what it was intended for, and drove him to distraction. Whether this Account be true, or that he became disturbed in mind another way, so far is certain, it was during some lucid intervals from his distemper, that he composed the Poem we have of his, about the nature of things. He had contracted a large acquaintance and familiarity with many great men of his time, and particularly a great Intimacy with *Memmius*, a Person of extraordinary merit, who then made a good figure in the commonwealth. LUCRETIVS has celebrated him in his works, which are inscribed to him: But what rendered his patron so amiable to our Author, could not protect him from the disgrace that overtook him and some other persons of distinction, who, being accused of canvassing and bribery for the Consulship, were condemned and banished for it. This accident our Poet is said to have taken so much to heart, that it has been generally looked upon as the principal cause of his death, which was violent: for, growing melancholy and weary of life, and his distemper daily increasing upon him, he put an end
to

The LIFE of LUCRETIOUS. 3.

to both, probably in a raging fit, in the third Consulship of Pompey, the year of Rome 701, when he was about forty four years of age.

His Poem seems to have been finished before he died; but, it being left somewhat incorrect, Cicero, who had a great value for him, revised it. It was a work always esteemed by the Ancients; and the Author, though he had many excellent Poets contemporary with him, was allowed to exceed them all in purity of stile and sublimity of thought. Ovid's opinion was, that his work would live 'till the dissolution of all things:

*Carmina sublimis tunc sunt peritura Lucreti
Exitio terras cum dabit una dies.*

And Statius seems to acknowledge all the dignity and merit of this writer, when in the compliment he pays to Lucan's memory, speaking of the Poets that would give place to him, he calls it the sublime rage of the learned LUCRETIOUS.

—— *Docti furor arduus Lucreti.*

Quintilian indeed acknowledges him to be a very elegant Author in his way, but thinks him a little difficult; which some Commentators granting, say it is the necessary consequence of his philosophical subject. Others alter Quintilian's expression, and are for solving the Difficulty by putting *diffusilis* in the place of *difficilis*. This indeed seems a more reasonable censure, since it is observable of LUCRETIOUS, that (perhaps the better to inculcate some important points in his doctrine) he frequently repeats the same lines, and sometimes passages, in different parts of the Poem.

THE great excellency of his style evidently appears from hence, that Virgil, the most correct of all writers, has frequently used and imitated his expressions. Some Authors assure us, that LUCRETIOUS died the same day the latter was born: But this is a great Mistake, for at that time Virgil was pursuing his studies at Milan. However, from this imaginary circumstance, those that believed the
Py.

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Pythagorean system, pleased themselves with a fiction, that the same sublime spirit of Poetry that first discovered itself in *Ennius*, being improved in LUCRETIVS, came to its perfection in *Virgil*; that is to say, one soul informed them all. And thus far is true, that LUCRETIVS's diction is so pure and elegant, and his versification, where the subject gives him the least scope, so noble and sounding, and his sentiments so truly poetical, that we may venture to say, Poetry must have declined among the *Romans*, had any but *Virgil* succeeded him. It must be granted, *Virgil* has in one respect studied mankind better than LUCRETIVS, and has artfully given his *Georgicks* so many imbellishments, to humour that inclination so inherent to our nature, of preferring pleasure to profit. And the consequence has been answerable; for whereas many read the *Georgicks* for their entertainment only, without ever thinking of the subject; few read LUCRETIVS, notwithstanding the sublimity of his genius, the boldness of his expression, and other Excellencies they allow him, but for their instruction. How much his subject wanted to be recommended by his art, he was pretty sensible; and therefore, though with too sparing a hand, bestowed on it some admirable poetical graces to recommend it, as we shall have more occasion to take notice of in the sequel: But most are inclined to think the Philosopher too often got the better of the Poet. *Virgil* was too judicious not to observe this defect; and accordingly has most artfully dressed up the didactic parts of his Poem with such magnificence, that the reader (whose attention hereby is always kept awake) with secret pleasure, finds himself insensibly instructed, without discerning the channel through which the precepts are conveyed to him. In the following passage LUCRETIVS gives us the reason of the difficulty of making his subject agreeable in verse. We may also observe, how handsomely he makes the motive of his undertaking so hard a task, to be his affection to *Memmius*, which looks like a more generous principle than the common one of reputation. *Lib. I. ver. 136.*

*Nec me animus fallit, Graiorum obscura reperta.
Difficile inlustrare Latinis versibus esse,*

(*Mulca*)

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5

(Multa novis verbis præsertim cum sit agendum.)
 Propter egestatem lingua, & rerum novitatem;
 Sed tua me virtus tamen, & sperata voluptas
 Suavis amicitia, quemvis perferre laborem
 Suadet, & inducit nocteis vigilare serenas,
 Quarentem dictis quibus, & quo carmine demum
 Clara tua possim præpandere lumina menti.

I'm sensible the Latin is too poor
 To equal the vast riches of the Grecian store:
 New matter various nature still affords,
 And new conceptions still require new words.
 Yet in respect to you, with great delight,
 No labour I refuse, but spend the night,
 Lab'ring fit numbers, and fit words to find,
 To make things plain, and to instruct your mind.

CREECH.

THE reason of his recommending his Precepts by the
 harmony of his verse, he thus agreeably illustrates;

*Nam veluti pueris absynthia tetra medentes,
 Cum dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum
 Contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,
 Ut puerorum atas improvida ludiscitur
 Laborum tenuis, interea perpotet amarum
 Absynthi laticem——*

For, as physicians use,
 In giving children draughts of bitter juice,
 To make them take it, tinge the cup with sweet,
 To cheat the lip, this first they eager meet,
 And then drink on and take the bitter draught.

CREECH.

Aristotle having laid it down as a maxim, that all
 Poetry should be an imitation of some action, (meaning
 the Epick and Dramatick) some have absurdly taken this
 in so strict and comprehensive a sense, as to take in all
 kinds under this rule, and exclude those, whose Writings
 are not conformable to it, from the class of Poets. Were
 it to hold good, *Hesiod* and *Virgil's Georgicks*, not to name
 many

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many more of the best compositions of the Ancients, must be rejected and condemned with LUCRETIVS. Besides, all Poets pretending to instruct, to do it agreeably, is declared by a great Critick and Poet to be the perfection of good writing.

Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci.

THE same Author has again confined the name not to the Epick and Dramatick Writers only, but extended it to all such, whose genius, invention, and masterly style deserves it.

*Ingenium cui sit, cui mens diviniore atque os,
Magna sonaturum des nominis hujus honorem.*

HOR. Art. Poet.

BUT if we examine some passages of this Author's writing, we shall soon discover the Poet, and regret that so noble a Muse should labour under so barren a subject.

Who can read the invocation without being sensibly touched with that exquisite pleasure, which alone is to be found in the reading of good Poets? How smoothly his numbers flow, whilst he describes the effects of love and concord, which he understands by the Name of *Venus*, whom he invokes:

*Te dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila cœli
Adventumque tuum; tibi suaves dadala tellus
Submittit flores; tibi rident æquora ponti;
Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine cœlum.
Nam simul ac species patefacta est verna diei;
Et referata viget genitalis aura favoni,
Aeria primum volucres te, Diva, tuumque
Significant initum percussa corda tua vi:
Inde fera pecudes persultant pabula lata,
Et rapidos tranant amnes: ita capta lepore
Illecebrisque tuis omnis Natura animantum
Te sequitur cupide quo quàmque inducere pergis.
Denique per maria ac montes, fluvioque rapaces
Frondiserasque domos avium, camposque virentes*

Omnibus.

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*Omnis incutiens blandum per pectus amorem,
Efficit, ut cupide generatim sacra propagent.*

*Quæ quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas,
Nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras
Exoritur; neque sit letum, neque amabile quicquam
Te sociam studeo scribendis versibus esse. Lib. i. Ver. 6.*

At thy approach, great Goddess, straight remove,
Whatever things are rough, and foes to love:
The clouds disperse, the winds most swiftly waste,
And rev'rently in murmurs breathe their last:
The earth with various Art (for thy warm powers
That dull mass feels) puts forth her gaudy flowers:
The roughest sea puts on smooth looks, and smiles;
The well-pleas'd Heav'n assumes a brighter ray
At thy approach, and makes a double day:
When first the gentle Spring begins t'inspire
Soft wishes, melting thoughts, and gay desire,
And warm *Favonius* fans the am'rous fire. }
First through the birds thy active flame does move,
Who with their mates sit down, and sing, and love;
They greedily their tuneful Voice employ,
At thy approach, the Author of their joy.
Each beast forgets his rage, and entertains
A softer fury through the flow'ry plains:
Then rapid streams, thro' woods and silent groves,
With wanton play, all run to meet their loves:
Whole nature yields to thy soft charms, the ways
Thou lead'st, she following eagerly obeys.
Acted by the kind principles thou dost infuse, }
Each bird and beast endeavours to produce }
His kind; and the decaying world renews. }
Thee, nature's pow'rful ruler, without whom
Nothing that's lovely, nothing gay, can come
From darksome *Chaos*' deep and ugly womb.
Thee, now I sing of nature, I must chuse
A Patron for my verse — CREECH.

A little lower the God of War is described forgetting,
in his Embraces of *Venus*, all his rage and violence. The
picture is so lovely, and the colouring so strong, you
would

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would think you saw him lying as the Poet has represented it. The Poet prays for the peace of his country, that was then distracted with civil broils and domestick dissentions. In order to which, alluding to the familiarity between *Mars* and her, he intreats *Venus* to exert her power over her Lover.

*Effice ut interea fera mœnera militiæ
Per maria ac terras omnes sopita quiescant.
Nam tu sola potes tranquilla pace juvare
Mortales, quoniam belli fera mœnera Mavors
Armipotens regit, in gremium qui sæpe tuum se
Rejicit, aeterno devinctus vulnere amoris:
Atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice reposta
Pascit amore avidos inhians in te, Dea, visus:
Eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore. Lib. i. Ver. 30.*

Let war's tumultuous noise and labours cease,
Let earth and sea enjoy a solid peace:
Peace is thy gift alone, for furious *Mars*
The only Governour and God of wars,
When tir'd with heat and toil, does oft resort
To taste the pleasures of the *Paphian* court;
Where on thy bosom he supinely lies,
And greedily drinks love at both his eyes:
'Till quite o'ercome, snatching an eager kiss,
He hastily goes on to greater bliss. CREECH.

THE ingenious Poet bids her chuse a time when the enamoured Deity could refuse her nothing. He then subjoins the reasons that particularly respect his work and his patron; why he thus intreats for his country's peace, the improvements of arts and sciences, being hardly attainable but in times of publick tranquillity, when the Professors thereof are protected and encouraged.

*Circumsusa super, suarum ex ore loquelas
Funde, petens placidam Romanis, incluta, pacem
Nam neque nos agere hoc patriæ tempore iniquo
Possumus aquo animo, nec Memmii clara propago
Talibus in rebus communi deesse saluti. Lib. i. Ver. 40.*
Thou

Thou, 'midst his strict embraces, clasp thy arms
About his neck, and call forth all thy charms;
Careless with all thy subtle arts, become
A flatterer, and beg a peace for Rome.
For 'midst rough wars, how can Verse smoothly flow;
Or in such storms the learned Laurel grow?
How can my *Memmius* have time to read,
Who by his ancestors fam'd glory led
To noble actions, must espouse the cause
Of his dear Country's liberty and laws? CREECH.

It had been happier for *Memmius* not to have had his country's welfare so much at heart; and though his banishment procured him liberty enough afterwards to attend to the Epicurean Philosophy, it was not such as our Author desired: For if he complains of the difficulty of writing whilst his country was in confusion and distress, how much worse must it be to his patron, to have his days imbibtered with the sad remembrance of his afflicted country, and his own unjust condemnation?

PERHAPS the Reader may, by this time, be curious to know who this *Memmius* was, for whom LUCRETIVS had so sincere an affection. He was descended of one of the most ancient families in Rome, being one of those that *Virgil* has immortalized in his *Æneid*, deriving them from *Mnestheus*, one of the principal Trojans that accompanied *Æneas* into Italy.

Mox Italus Mnestheus, genus à quo nomine Memmi.

VIRG. *Æn. Lib. 5.*

THIS C. *Memmius* had been Prætor of *Bithynia*, and upon his return was accused of nine misdemeanors by *Cæsar* to the people, but acquitted, and afterwards grew very intimate with him. He was also Tribune of the people, when among others he accused *Rabinus*, in whose defence *Cicero* made the Oration we have under that name.* *Cicero* gives him the character of a great scholar, but most skilled in the Greek Learning, an ingenious and good Orator, and master of a polite easy style; so that if

he

* *Cic. Lib. de Clar. Orat. ad Brutum.*

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he fell short of perfection in some respects, it was not for want of parts, but application. He was also something of a Poet; but *A. Gellius* reckons his versification harsh and unharmonious; which was the general fault of that age; LUCRETIVS and *Catullus* being the first that seem much to have studied the variety and cadence of their numbers. * *Cicero*, in one of his Epistles to *Sulpitius*, tells us he was innocent, and had retired after his exile to *Athens*, from thence to *Mitylene*, and at last settled at *Parras*, where he died not many years after his banishment; that Epistle of *Cicero* having been wrote but seven years after that time, wherein he is said to have been already dead.

LUCRETIVS in the prosecution of his work, had frequently occasion to refute the opinions of such as were contrary to his doctrine. It is worth the Reader's while to observe how handsomely he behaves himself on these occasions, and how unwilling to detract from the merit of his adversary. This generosity of mind appears in that passage, where being to oppose some notions advanced by *Empedocles*, he first gives him this fine character: For having occasionally mentioned *Sicily*, he goes on,

*Quæ cum magna modis multis miranda videtur
Gentibus humanis regio, visendaque fertur
Rebus opima bonis, multa munica virum vi:
Nil tamen hoc habuisse viro præclarior in se,
Nec sanctum magis, & mirum, clarumve videtur.
Carmina quin etiam divini pectoris ejus
Vociferantur, & exponunt præclara reperta,
Ut vix humana videatur stirpe creatus. Lib.i. Ver. 727.*

This Isle though with such wondrous heights as these
She calls forth travellers, and the curious please:
Though rich with men and fruit, has rarely shown
A thing more glorious than this single one.
His verse compos'd of nature's works, declare
His wit was strong, and his invention rare;
His Judgment-deep and sound, from whence began,
And justly too, to think him more than Man.

CREECH.

* *Cic. Ep. Fam. L. 13. Ep. 20. ad S. Sulpitium.*

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I shall wave making many observations on the subject of his writings, which being philosophical, does not so properly come under our notice: only it may be proper to observe, that his sublime manner of treating it, has chalked out a nobler way to the perfection of the Epick style, than any of his predecessors; and which has hardly been followed by any but *Virgil*. So that if he had not embraced the philosophy of *Epicurus*, which is in itself so contrary to all poetical inventions, he was endowed with a genius capable of the noblest compositions; his works abundantly proving him possessed of all the fire, the sublimity and harmony of expression, and dignity of sentiments, requisite to adorn an Epick Poem. And the world has reason to lament the unhappiness of a dissemper, from whose intervals we have a work of so much spirit. Besides, the unhappy times in which he lived, and his patron's banishment, were enough to make a man of his generous temper lay aside all thoughts of this nature.

I proceed to give some instances, by which the Reader will see how much the richness of his vein has got the better of the dryness of his subject. To begin with his descriptions, they are generally bold and expressive, and animated with the most lively figures: as that of *Sicily*,

*Insula quem Triquetris terrarum gessit in oris ;
Quam fluitans circum magnis amfractibus aquor
Ionium glaucis adspersit rivus ab undis :
Angustoque fretu rapidum mare dividit undis
Italia terrarum oras à finibus ejus ;
Hic est vasta Charybdis, & hic Ætnæa minantur
Murmura flammæ rursus se colligere in iras,
Faucibus eruptos iterum ut vis evomat igneis ;
Ad cœlumque ferat flammæ fulgura rursus.*

Lib. I. Ver. 718.

In fruitful *Sicily*, whose crooked sides
Th' *Ionian* washes with impetuous tides,
And a small frith from *Italy* divides.
Here *Scylla* raves, and fierce *Charybdis* roars,
Beating with boist'rous waves the trembling shores.

Here

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Here press'd *Enceladus* with mighty loads,
Vomits revenge in flames against the gods :
Thro' *Ætna's* jaws he impudently threatens,
And thund'ring heaven with equal thunder beats.

CREECH.

THIS other of the calf sacrific'd, and the dam's concern for the loss, has likewise its beauties, being extremely just and pathetical; and if the Poet had sought for embellishment, he might have plac'd it in the first book, after he had describ'd the cruel *Greeks*, sacrificing *Iphigenia* to *Diana*; that is also very poetical, but too long to be quoted.

*Nam sæpe ante deum vitulus delubra decora
Turicremas propter mactatus concidit aras,
Sanguinis expirans calidum de pectore flumen,
At mater virides saltus orbata peragrans,
Liquit humi pedibus vestigia pressa bisulcis,
Omnia convivens oculis loca, si queat usquam
Conspicere amissum foetum; completque querelis
Frundiferum nemus adstans; & crebra revisit
Ad stabulum, desiderio perfixa juvenci:
Nec tenera salices, atque herba rore vigentes,
Fluminaque ulla queunt summis labentia ripis
Obiectare animum, subitamque avertere curam:
Nec vitulorum alia species per pabula lata
Derivare queunt animum, curaque levare. Lib. II. v. 352.*

For often, when an inn'cent heifer dies
To angry Gods, a spotless sacrifice;
When all around she sheds atoning blood,
And stains the altars with a purple flood:
Her dam beats o'er the fields in wild despair,
And wounds with loud complaints the tender air.
Now here, now there, will run, and still complain:
Now leaves her stall, and then returns again.
Mad for her young, the ev'ry field does trace,
With passionate eyes, she visits ev'ry place.
No streams, no flowers, her former great delight,
Can raise, or quicken, her dead appetite:

Allay

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Allay her grief, divert her pining care ;
 And tho' a thousand heifers should appear
 More fat, more fair than her's, she passes by,
 And looks on none, or with a slighting eye. CREECH.

THE following short description of the shells that cover the sea-shore, is the more remarkably beautiful, as it is no extraordinary subject for the Poet to display his Art in ; and is introduced only to illustrate a philosophical notion of the *Epicureans*, that their imaginary Atoms are not all of the same configuration and shape.

*Concharumque genus parili ratione videmus
 Pingere telluris gremium, qua mollibus undis
 Littoris incurvi bibulam pavit aquor arenam.*

Lib. II. v. 374.

And so in shells, where waters washing o'er,
 With wanton kisses, bathe the am'rous shore. CREECH.

THE two last verses, by their smooth and easy flowing, seem almost, to convey to the ear, the very sound of the waves gently dashing against the shore. But his description of the plague at *Athens*, is the most finished piece of Poetry in the work. The Author intending to exert himself in his last book, invokes the *Muse* to assist him.

*Tu mihi suprema praescripta ad candida calcis
 Currenti spatium prae monstra, callida musa
 Caliope, requies hominum, divumque voluptas:
 Te duce, ut insignem capiam cum laude coronam.*

Lib. IV. v. 91.

And you, my sweetest *Muse*, come lead me on,
 I'm eager, and 'tis time that I were gone :
 Come, lead me on, and shew the path to gain
 The race, and glory too, and crown my pain. CREECH.

How terribly has he described its first coming, and dreadful march from *Aegypt* ?

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*Hac ratio quondam morborum, & mortifer æstus
Finibus Cecropiis funestos reddidit agros,
Vastavitq; vias, exhausit civibus urbem.
Nam penitus veniens Ægypti è finibus ortus,
Aëra permensus multum, camposq; natantes,
Incubuit tandem populo Pandionis. — Lib. VI. v. 1136.*

A plague, thus rais'd, laid learned Athens waste;
Thro' every street, thro' all the town it pass'd,
Blasting both men and beast with pois'nous wind;
Death fled before, and ruin stalk'd behind.
From Ægypt's burning sands the fever came
More hot than those that rais'd the deadly flame:
The wind, that bore the fate, went slowly on,
And as it went, was heard to sigh and groan.
At last, the raging plague did Athens seize. CREECH.

THE symptoms of this sickness, are strongly painted
in what follows:

*Principio caput incensum fervore gerebant;
Et duplices oculos suffusa luce rubentes.
Sudabant etiam fauces intrinsecus atro
Sanguine, & ulceribus vocis via sepe coibat;
Atque animi interpres manabat lingua cruore,
Debilitata malis, motu gravis, aspera tactu:
Inde, ubi per fauces pectus complerat, & ipsum
Morbida vis in cor mæstum confluxerat agris;
Omnia tum vero vitæ claustra lababant.
Spiritus ore foras tetrum volvebat odorem,
Rancida quo perolent projecta cadavera ritu.
Atque animi prorsum vires totius, & omne
Languibat corpus lethi jam limine in ipso.
Intolerabilibusque malis erat anxius angur
Assidue comes, & gemitu commixta querela
Singultusque frequens, — &c. Lib. VI. v. 1143.*

First, fierce unusual heats did seize the head,
The glowing eyes, with bloodshot beams look'd red
Like blazing stars, approaching fate to eschew'd.
The mouth and jaws were fill'd with clotted blood,

The

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The throat with ulcers! the tongue could speak no more,
But overflow'd, and drown'd in putrid gore,
Grew useless, rough, and scarce would make a moan;
Nay, scarce enjoy'd the wretched pow'r to groan.

NEXT thro' the jaws, the plague did reach the breast,
And there, the heart, the seat of life, possess'd.
Then life began to fail: strange slimes did come
From every putrid breast, as from a tomb:
A sad preface that death prepar'd the Room.
The body weak, the mind did sadly wait,
And fear'd, but could not flie, approaching fate.
To these fierce pains were join'd continual care,
And sad complainings, groans, and deep despair.

CREECH.

THE following lines are a lively representation of a very melancholy icene, arising from the violence of the distemper, which now seizes the strong and vigorous.

— *Jam pastor & armentarius omnis,
Et robustus item curvi moderator aratri,
Languebant, penitusque casis contrusa jacebant
Corpora, paupertate & morbo dedita morti.
Exanimis pueris super exanimata parentum
Corpora nonnunquam posses, retroque videre
Matribus, & patribus natos super edere vitam.*

Lib. VI. v. 1250.

The shepherd 'midst his flocks resign'd his breath,
Th' infected ploughman burnt and starv'd to death:
By plague and famine both, the deed was done,
The ploughman was too strong to yield to one:
Here dying parents on their children cast,
There children on their parents breath'd their last.

CREECH.

IN these others the distress is very moving, and wonderfully adapted to raise our compassion.

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*Multa siti prostrata viam per, proque voluta
Corpora filanos ad aquarum strata jacebant,
Interclusa anima nimia ab dulcedine aquarum.*

Lib. VI. v. 1262.

— Some near the fountains lay,
Which quench'd their flame, but wash'd their soul away.
CREECH.

I shall conclude the quotation with that passage where the unhappy people were no longer able to attend the service of the gods, nor bestow funeral rites on their friends, because of the great havock the distemper is said to have made among them. If the Reader will take the trouble to compare this account of the plague in LUCRETIVS, with that of *Virgil*, in the *Georgicks*, and *Ovid* in his *Metamorphoses*, he will find nothing to LUCRETIVS's disadvantage, though *Virgil* has lost no opportunity of improving any beauties he found in his master; for such, I may venture to say, our author was to him, without any disparagement to the Prince of the Roman Poets.

*Nec jam religio divorum, nec numina magni
Pendebantur: enim presens dolor exsuperabat.
Nec mos ille sepultura remanebat in urbe,
Ut prius hic populus semper consuêrat humari:
Perturbatus enim totus trepidabat, & unus
Quisque suum pro re consortem mœstus humabat.*

Lib. VI. v. 1274.

Now, no religion, now, no gods were fear'd;
Greater than all the present plague appear'd;
All laws of burial lost, and all confus'd,
No solemn fires, no decent order us'd:
But as the state of things would then permit,
Men burn'd their friends, nor look'd on just and fit.
CREECH.

He has but few Similies; that being an ornament his philosophical subject would not easily admit of; and yet, though

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though he kept so close to his subject, in the beginning of every Book, his Genius seems to shake off those fetters that would confine it, and rises with a spirit hardly equalled by any other Writer. Sometimes it discovers itself in a noble pity of the ignorance of Mankind, blinded by superstition and ignorance, and triumphs in the fancied possession of true wisdom and knowledge, communicated by the divine *Epicurus*. Prepossess'd, as I know he will be, in his disfavour, the Reader will hardly forbear admiring him, when he comes to view that great Philosopher in the light our Author has placed him, in the following passage.

*Humana ante oculos fadè cum vita jaceret,
In terris oppressa gravi sub religione,
Quæ caput a cæli regionibus ostendebat,
Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans :
Primum Graius homo mortalis tollere contra
Est oculos ausus, primusque obsistere contra :
Quem nec fama Deum, nec fulmina, nec minitanti
Murmure compressu cælum ; sed eo magis acrem
Virtutem irritat animi, confringere ut arcta
Natura primus portarum claustra cœpiret.
Ergo vivida vis animi pervicit ; & extra
Processit longe flammantia mœnia mundi :
Atque omne immensum peragravit mente animoque ;
Unde refert nobis victor quid possit oriri,
Quid nequeat ; finita potestas denique cuique
Quanam sit ratione ; utque alte terminus hærens.
Obteritur, nos exæquat Victorio Cælo.*

Lib. I. v. 62.

Long time Men lay oppress'd with slavish fear,
Religion's tyranny did domineer ;
And being plac'd in Heav'n, look'd proudly down,
And frighted abject spirits with her frown.
At length a mighty man of Greece began
To assert the nat'ral liberty of Man,
By senseless terrors, and vain fancies led
To slav'ry : straight the conquer'd fantom fled !

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Not the fam'd stories of the deity,
 Not all the thunder of the threatening sky
 Could stop his rising Soul; thro' all he past,
 The strongest bounds that powerful nature cast:
 His vigorous and active mind was hurl'd
 Beyond the flaming limits of this World,
 Into the mighty Space, and there did see
 How things begin, what can, what cannot be:
 How all must die, all yield to fatal force,
 What steady limits bound their nat'ral course.
 He saw all this, which others sought in vain,
 Thus by his conquest, we our right regain,
 Religion he subdu'd, and we now reign. CREECH. }

IN the beginning of the second Book, he thus finely illustrates the satisfaction a wise Man finds, when conscious to himself, that he is not hurried along by the same tide of passions and extravagant desires that distract other Men. The pomp of expression, and harmony of the numbers, are agreeable to the beauty of the thought. Here are two comparisons in this passage, but each so noble, and so artfully interwoven into the discourse, that it adds to the majesty of the stile.

*Suave, mari magno turbantibus aquora ventis,
 E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;
 Non quia vexare quonquam est jucunda voluptas,
 Sed, quibus ipse malis careas, quia cernere suave est.
 Suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri
 Per campos instructa, tua sine parte pericli;
 Sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere
 Editæ doctrina sapientum templa serena;
 Despicere unde queas alios, passimq; videre
 Errare, atq; viam palantis querere vite. Lib. II. v. 1.*

'Tis pleasant safely to behold from shore,
 The rowling ship; and hear the tempest roar;
 Not that another's pain is our delight
 But pains unfelt, produce the pleasing sight.
 'Tis pleasant also, to behold from far,
 The moving legions mingled in the war:

But

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But much more sweet thy lab'ring steps to guide
To Virtues heights, with Wisdom well supply'd ;
And all the magazines of learning fortify'd :
From thence to look below on human kind,
Bewilder'd in the maze of life, and blind. DRYDEN.

How just is the following contrast, between the ostentation of luxury, and the simplicity of a rural life.

*Si non aurea sunt juvenum simulacra per ades
Lampades igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,
Lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur,
Nec domus argento fulget, auroq; renidet ;
Nec citharis reboant laqueata aurataque templa :
Attamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli
Propter aqua rivum, sub ramis arboris alta,
Non magnis opibus jucunde corpora curant :
Præsertim cum tempestas arridet, & anni
Tempora conspurgunt viridantes floribus herbas.* Lib. II. v. 24.

— What, tho' no boys of gold
Adorn the walls, and sprightly tapers hold,
Whose beauteous rays, scatt'ring the gaudy light
Might grace the feasts, and revels of the night :
What, tho' no Gold adorns ; no Musick's sound
With doubled sweetness from the roofs rebound :
Yet underneath a loving mirtles shade,
Hard by a purling stream supinely laid ;
When spring with fragrant flowers the earth has spread,
And sweetest roses grow around our head ;
Envy'd by wealth and power, with small expence,
We may enjoy the sweet delights of sense. CREECH.

THE impatience of a Lover, and the impossibility of his being contented, though in full possession of the beloved object, is ingeniously signified in the following comparison; though here it may be said in answer to the Poet, that the anxiety which attends the gratification of our Passions, cannot be made a motive of forsaking them, on the foot of being uneasy and painful, since it is likely, the greatest pleasure arising from satisfying them, may be

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owing to their anxiety : but it is so far truly urged, as it shews that we are never really content in the height of our enjoyments, and therefore may be made a motive to persuade us to place our affections on such an Object, whose perfections are large enough to satisfy our utmost wishes, and excellent enough to fill the whole capacity of our Soul with admiration and delight. But such an Object is not to be found in the erroneous and impious Doctrine of *Epicurus*. I shall make this one observation more, concerning this and the preceeding passage ; that they fully justify *Epicurus*, from the imputation of encouraging sensual pleasure ; the main Drift of all the moral parts of *Lucretius's* Writings, being on the contrary, to recommend Sobriety and Temperance.

*Ut bibere in somnis sitiens cum querit, & humor
Non datur, ardorem in membris qui stingere possit :
Sed laticum simulacra petit, frustra que laborat :
In medioque fuit torrenti flumine potans :
Sic in amore venus simulacris ludit amantes.*

Lib. IV. v. 1091.

As he who in a dream with drought is curs'd,
And finds no real drink to quench his thirst,
Runs to imagin'd lakes, his heat to steep,
And vainly swills, and labours in his sleep :
So Love with phantoms cheats our longing Eyes.

DRYDEN.

To convince Men of the folly of their being uneasy to die, he puts them in mind that the greatest Heroes have undergone the same fate before them. This passage is very sublime.

*Ille quoque ipse, viam qui quondam per mare magnum
Stravit, iterque dedit legionibus ire per altum,
Ac pedibus salvas docuit superare lacunas :
Et contempsit, aquis insultans, murmura ponti,
Lumine adempto, animam moribundo corpore fudit.
Scipiades belli fulmen, Carthaginis horror,
Ossa dedit terra, proinde ac famul infimus esset.*

Adde

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*Adde repertores doctrinarum, atque leporum;
Adde Heliconiadum comites; quorum unus Homerus
Sceptra potitus, eadem aliis sopitu' quiete est:*

*Denique Democritum postquam matura vetustas
Admonuit memores motus languescere mentis;
Sponte sua letho caput obvius obtulit ipse.*

*Ipse Epicurus obit decurso limite vite,
Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit, & omnes
Prastrinxit stellas, exortus uti atherens Sol.*

Tu vero dubitabis & indignabere obire?

Lib. III. v. 1043.

Consider even He, that mighty He,
Who laugh'd at all the threatning of the Sea;
Who chain'd the Ocean once, and proudly led
His Legions o'er the fetter'd waves, is dead.
Scipio, that Scourge of *Carthage*, now the grave
Keeps pris'ner, like the meanest common slave:
Nay, greatest Wits, and Poets too, that give
Eternity to others, cease to live.
Homer, their Prince, that darling of the nine,
(What *Troy* would at a second Fall repine,
To be thus sung?) is nothing now but fame;
A lasting, far diffus'd, but empty name.
Democritus, as feeble age came on,
And told him it was time he should be gone;
For then his mind's brisk powers grew weak; he cry'd,
I will obey thy summons Fate, and dy'd.
Nay, *Epicurus*' race of Life is run;
That Man of Wit, who other Men outshone,
As far as meaner Stars, the mid-day sun.
Then how dar'st thou repine to die and grieve? *Creech*.

THE effects of unlawful Love, with all the inconveniences attending it, are strongly painted in these lines, which have something of the satirick spirit in them.

*Adde quod alterius sub nutu degitur atas.
Labitur interea res, & vadimonia fiunt,
Languent officia, atque agrotat fama vacillans;
Unguenta, & pulcra in pedibus Sicyonia rident:*

D 5

Scilicet

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*Scilicet & grandes viridi cum luce smaragdi
Auro includuntur, teriturque thalassina vestis
Assidue, & veneris sudorem exercita potat :
Et bene parta patrum sunt anademata, mitra :
Interdum in pallam, ac Melitensia, Ceaque vertunt.
Eximia veste & victu convivio, ludi,
Pocula crebra, unguenta, corona,serta parantur :
Nequicquam : quoniam medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat :
Aut quod conscius ipse animus se forte remordet,
Desidio:è agere atatem, lustrisque perire. Lib. IV. v. 1116.*

Besides, they waste their strength, their vigour kill,
And live poor Slaves unto another's will :
Debts they contract apace, their money flies ;
Their fame, their honour too, grows sick and dies :
Rich shoes, and jewels, set in gold adorn
The feet ; the richest purple vests are worn :
The wealth their fathers toil'd, and fought to gain,
Now buys a coat, a mitre, and a chain.
Great shows and sports are made, and royal feasts,
Where choicest meats and wines provoke the guests :
Where gaudy tapestry, and odours spread
O'er all the room, and crowns grace ev'ry head,
In vain ; for still some bitter thought destroys
His fancy'd mirth, and poisons all his joys.
First guilty conscience does that mirror bring,
Then sharp remorse shoots out her angry sting ;
And anxious thoughts, within themselves at strife,
Upbraid the long, mispent, luxurious life. CREECH.

INDEED the whole passage is admirable, and goes on to describe the torments of jealousy, and all the vexatious circumstances of unsuccessful Love : In a word, the strongest passages in *Horace*, *Ovid*, and other Poets, have not been able to furnish more lively descriptions of this passion, than *LUCRETIVS*. In some other places, as well as here, the Poet has sufficiently discovered his abilities to write in the satirick style, had he cared to apply himself that way, as the Reader will better perceive, by reading over this whole passage ; part of which we have already

The LIFE of LUCRETIVS. 23

already quoted, from v. 1115. of Book IV. to v. 1184 ; and from v. 45, of Book III. to v. 90. These Examples, I hope, will be enough to justify his claim to the bays, and make the Reader allow him that merit, which our Author has asserted to himself in the beginning of Book IV. where he sings his own Panegyrick ; with which I conclude the Account of his Life and Writings.

*Avia pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante
Trita solo : juvat integros accedere fontes,
Atque haurire ; juvatque novos decerpere flores
Insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam
Unde prius nulli velârunt tempora musa.
Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus, & artis
Religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo :
Deinde quod obscura de re tam lucida pango
Carmina, musæo contingens cuncta lepore.*

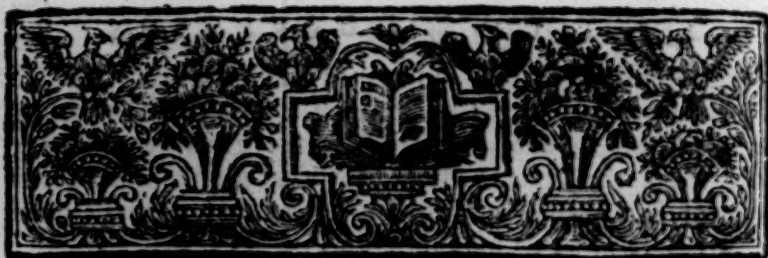
Lib. IV.

I feel, I rising feel, Poetick heats,
And now inspir'd, trace o'er the Muses seats
Untrodden yet ; 'tis sweet to visit first
Untouch'd and virgin streams, and quench my thirst.
I joy to crop fresh flowers, and get a crown
For new and rare inventions of my own :
So noble, great, and gen'rous the design,
That none of all the mighty tuneful Nine
E'er grac'd a head with laurels like to mine.
For first I teach great things in lofty strains,
And loose men from religion's grievous chains :
Next, tho' my subject's dark, my verse is clear,
And sweet, with tansey flowing every where.

CREECH.



THE



THE
L I F E
O F
C A T U L L U S.



AIUS VALERIUS CATULLUS was born in the Peninsula of *Sirmio*, formed by the Lake *Benacus*, in the territory of *Verona*, about eighty years before the Birth of Christ. He was descended of a good Family in *Verona*, and his Father was familiarly acquainted with *Julius Caesar*. Our Poet was carried to *Rome* in his youth, by *Manlius*, a Nobleman, and one of his best Patrons, to whom he has inscribed several of his Poems. Here he soon discovered the vivacity of his Genius, and the elegance of his Style; and so distinguished himself by his pleasantry and wit, that he became universally esteemed, and gained *Cicero* for his Patron. In one of his pieces, CATULLUS thus ingeniously thanks the Orator for his Patronage.

*Dissertissime Romuli nepotum
Quot sunt, quotque fuere, Marce Tulli,
Quotque post aliis erunt in annis,
Gratias tibi maximas CATULLUS*

Agi

The LIFE of CATULLUS. 25

*Agit pessimus omnium poeta;
Tanto pessimus omnium poeta,
Quanto tu optimus omnium patronus.* Lyric. 47.

His Merit recommended him to the greatest men of his time; as *Plancus*, *Calvus*, *Cinna*, &c. And *Furius*, *Aurelius*, *Fabullus*, and *Veranius*, are mentioned in his Writings, as his most intimate friends. We likewise find mention made of a brother of his, whom he seems to have tenderly loved. He has very affectionately lamented his loss in many places, but particularly in the following passage of his Elegy to *Manlius*.

*Tu mea, tu moriens, fregisti commoda frater,
Tecum una tota est nostra sepulta domus;
Omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra,
Quae tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor:
Quoq; ego interitu tota de mente fugavi
Hec studia, atque omnes delicias animi.* Eleg. 46.

In the same Elegy he has given us the following account of his many obligations to *Manlius*.

*Hoc tibi quod potui confectum carmine munus
Pro multis, Manli, redditur officij.
Ne vestrum scabra tangat robigine nomen,
Hec atque illa dies, atque alia, atque alia.
Huc addant divi quam plurima, quae Themis olim
Antiquis solita est munera ferre piis.
Sitis felices, & tu simul, & tua vita,
Et domus ipse in qua lusimus, & domina;
Et qui principio nobis terram dedit, à quo
Sunt primo nobis omnia nata bona.* Eleg. 46.

He had two Mistresses, *Isithilla* of *Verona*, and *Clodia* a Roman Lady, whom he has celebrated under the feigned name of *Lesbia*, and immortalized, together with her favourite Sparrow, in his Poems. He died in the flower of his age, and the height of his reputation, when he was about thirty years of age; at which time *Virgil* was sent to pursue his studies at *Cremona*. But they are very much

26 The LIFE of CATULLUS.

much mistaken, who, on *Martial's* authority, assure us that CATULLUS dedicated his Poem on *Lesbia's* Sparrow to him; but 'tis for want of rightly understanding that Author.

*Sic forsan tener ausus est CATULLUS
Magno mittere passerem Maroni.*

Martial there addresses a Poem to *Silius Italicus*, one of his Patrons, and a great Poet, whom he compliments to this effect: "I have taken the liberty to send this little piece to you, as CATULLUS might have done his Poem on *Lesbia's* Sparrow to *Virgil*, had they been contemporaries." And we shall be farther satisfied of this, if we observe, that *Martial* thought it an honour to be counted next to CATULLUS, with whom he was fond of being compared. Says he,

*Nec multos mihi praeferas poetas
Uno sed tibi sim minor CATULLO.*

NAY, such was *Martial's* veneration for our author, that he has not scrupled to put him on a level with *Virgil*, saying, their native cities were equally beholden to these two Poets.

*Tantum magna suo debet Verona CATULLO,
Quantum parva suo Mantua Virgilio.*

WHAT remains of his Works, is hardly enough to keep up the great Reputation he had with the Ancients. They may serve however to judge of his Genius by, which led him through most kinds of Poetry. At the same time it must be considered in his behalf, that *Lucretius* was the only Poet whose Verse had any tolerable elegance or harmony in it at that time, and that he was almost his contemporary; and his Works probably were not seen by our Author, or but a little before his death; *Lucretius's* Poem not being published till some time after his decease. 'Tis true, CATULLUS's Verse is often harsh, and his Numbers bad; but they are very much superior

The LIFE of CATULLUS. 27

to those of *Ennius* and *Lucilius*, who preceeded him. CATULLUS's Writings, of which a great many, and possibly the best. are lost, got him the Name of *the Learned*: the reason of it perhaps would be more evident, if we had the rest of his compositions; for we have the authority of *A. Gellius*, *Apuleius*, and both the *Plinys*, who say he was peculiarly surnamed *the Learned*. The Elder *Pliny* mentions a Love-poem, concerning charms and incantations, like that of *Virgil's* in one of his *Eclogues*. His present works are inscribed to *C. Nepos*, whom he compliments on his writing a general History in three books.

*Quoi dono novum lepidum libellum
Arida modo pumice expolitum?
Corneli, tibi; namque tu solebas
Meas esse aliquid putare nugas.
Jam tu cum ausus es unus Italorum;
Omne ævum tribus explicare chartis
Doctis Jupiter, & laboriosis.*

Carm. 1.

AMONG many others that our Author inveighed against, and lashed in his Iambicks, none suffered more severely than *J. Caesar*, under the name of *Mamurra*. On this occasion, that great man gave a remarkable proof of his humanity. After CATULLUS, by repeated invectives, had given sufficient occasion to *Caesar* to relent it, from one whose father had been his familiar friend; he, instead of expressing any uneasiness at this treatment, generously invited the Poet to supper with him, and there treated him with that Affability and good nature, that the Poet, ashamed of what he had done to injure him, resolved to make some amends by his silence for the future.

CATULLUS's early death, was certainly to be lamented by all lovers of true wit and learning, since it has robbed us of many improvements which he was likely to have made in this kind of Poetry; I mean his Hendecasyllables, where he seems to excel most. There are some finished pieces of his, that are inimitable in their kind; such is his Poem on *Lesbia's Sparrow*, and that on *Acme* and *Septimius*; the translation of *Callimachus's*

Elegy

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Elegy on Queen *Berenice's* Hair, is also an excellent piece. His Lyric Poems are many of them well written, particularly the *Carmen Seculare*; and if they are less taken notice of now, it must be attributed not so much to their want of merit, as to the excellency of those which *Horace* composed not long afterwards. In general there is an easy unaffected elegance and pleasantry of wit that enlivens this Poet's Style, and gives it a character peculiar to himself; though it found several admirers, and some imitators: and it has generally been esteemed the best manner in the Epigrammatick Style.

BEFORE I conclude, I have something to offer in justification of this Writer, which may serve as an apology for others likewise among the Heathen Poets, who have been guilty of the same error: This Writer has been very much censured for the Lewdness of some of his Pieces, and many have on that account concluded he was a Debauchee. That he was of a gay amorous temper, has been already observed; but to infer the enormous character of the Man, from the looseness of his Writings, is what he has, as well as *Ovid* and *Martial*, cautioned his Readers not to do, in one of his pieces addressed to *Furius* and *Aurelius*, who perhaps had rallied him on this account: We would not be understood by any means to vindicate this conduct in our Author, but barely to shew, that Obscenity, according to the Antients, was not only allowable in these sort of Compositions, but when artfully drest up, was esteemed one of its greatest beauties: What the Poet says in the following lines, was the general sense of those times.

*Nam castum esse decet pium poetam
Ipsam; versiculos nihil necesse est:
Qui tum denique habent salern & leporem
Si sint molliculi & parum pudici.* Lyric. 17.

AND we learn from *Pliny* the Younger, that they were in the age he lived, of the same opinion. In the 14th Ep. of *Lib. 4.* speaking of his Hendecasyllables, which he sent his friend *Paternus*, he goes on thus: "*Ex quibus tamen*
"*si nonnulla tibi paulo petulantiora videbuntur, erit erudi-*
"*tionis*

The LIFE of CATULLUS. 29

"tionis tua cogitare, summos illos & gravissimos viros,
"qui talia scripserunt, non modo lascivia rerum, sed ne nudis
"quidem verbis abstinuisse: quæ nos resugimus, non quia
"severiores, sed quia timidiores sumus. Scimus alioqui
"hujus opusculi illam esse verissimam legem, quam Catullus
"expressit."—And then he subjoins the foregoing Verses.

From hence I hope the most rigid and most scrupulous Reader will allow, that though the imitation of this their liberty in modern Poets would be abominable with us as Christians, it was passed into a Law among them, (as *Pliny* says) to be wanton and loose in these little Poems; and that if he himself forbore the nakedness of expression, it was not because he pretended to a greater virtue than others, but from a certain timorousness: Indeed it seems as if he really thought it indecent to be so plain in his expressions, and fulsome in his thoughts; but prudently contented himself to omit the practice of it, without presuming to condemn a custom that had so universally prevailed. Many things more might be brought to shew the allowableness of this practice among the *Greeks* as well as *Romans*; but as we think it in the highest degree criminal and offensive in itself, and of most pernicious consequence to the Readers, especially the youth of both sexes, into whose hands such pieces may happen to fall, we shall say no more on this Head, being very unwilling to give any encouragement to modern Authors to continue this practice, which too many have most shamefully done; and would therefore be glad, however absurdly, to justify their own conduct from that of the antients.



THE



T H E
L I F E
O F
T I B U L L U S.



ALBIUS TIBULLUS was born at Rome, under the Consulship of *Hirius* and *Pansa*, much about the same time with *Ovid*. His Parentage was noble; his Father being of the Equestrian Order, and descended of a Family that had frequently made a considerable figure in peace and war: He himself was of a very promising disposition in his youth, and set out into the world with all the advantages of fortune, and the greatest accomplishments of mind and person. This is agreeable to the character *Horace* has given us of him.

*Non tu corpus eras sine pectore: Dij tibi formam,
Dij tibi divitias dederant, artemque fruendi.
Quid roveat dulci nutricula majus alumno
Quam sapere & fari ut possit qua sentiat; utque
Gratia, fama, valetudo contingat abunde,
Et mundus victus, non deficiente crumena.*

The LIFE of TIBULLUS. 31

AMONG the great men of the age, to whom his merit had recommended him, he singled out *Messala Corvinus* for his Patron; and has discovered a singular friendship for that Nobleman, much like that of *Horace* for *Mecenas*. The Poet above quoted has informed us, that our Author had a Country seat at *Pedum*, a Town in *Latium*, not far from *Rome*; as we may learn from the same Poet.

Quid nunc te dicam facere in Regione Pedana?

HE was a great sufferer in the Civil Wars, the greatest part of his estate falling a prey to the licentiousness of those times; for we find no account that our Poet was concerned in any party; and indeed he seems to have been too much a man of pleasure to apply himself much to State affairs: he makes mention of his losses, in a Poem inscribed to his beloved *Messala*.

*Nam mihi cum magnis opibus domus alta niteret,
Cui fuerant flavi ditantes ordine sulci.
Horrea fœcundis indeficientia mensis
Cuique pecus denso pascebant agmine colles.
Et domino satis, & nimium furique lupoque
Nunc desiderium superest.*—————

BUT that all his fortunes were not swallowed up in this calamity, we learn from the verses immediately following, wherein he pays a fine compliment to his Patron, whom he assures, the loss of what was left him, however grievous it would be, should never make him unmindful of his merit, or forget to celebrate his praises in his Works.

————— *Nam cura novatur*
Quum memor anteauctos semper dolor admonet annos:
Sed licet asperiora cadant, spoliisque relictis,
Non te deficient nostra memorare camœna. Ibid:

HIS love to *Messala*, made him forget his love of ease, and follow that Nobleman into *Gaul*, where he
was

32 The LIFE of TIBULLUS.

was victorious; for which a Triumph was decreed him upon his return to Rome. This the Poet speaks of as follows:

*At te victrices laurus, Messala, gerentem
Portabar nitidis currus eburnus equis.
Non sine me est tibi partus honos, Tarbella, Pyrene
Testis, & oceani littora Santonici.
Testis Arar, Rhodanusque celer, magnusque Garumna,
Carnuti & flavi carula lympa Liger. Lib. 1. El. 7.*

As he prepared to attend *Messala* on another expedition, *TIBULLUS* fell sick by the way, and was forced to stay in the Island of *Phaacia*, or *Coreyra*; on which occasion he composed the third Elegy of the fourth book;

*Ibitis Ægeas sine me, Messala, per undas
O utinam memores ipse cohorsque mei!
Me tenet ignotis agrum, Phaacia, terris.* Ibid.

Desiring, that if he should dye of his illness, he might have this Epitaph engraven on his Monument:

*Hic jacet immitti consumptus morte Tibullus;
Messalam terra dum sequiturque mari.* Ibid.

THOUGH he recovered from this attack, Death did not spare him much longer, but carried him off in the flower of his age. Whilst he lay dangerously ill in this Island, his greatest concern was, that he could not embrace his *Delia* in his last moments: Love in the extremity of his illness, having the greatest share in his thoughts; which is a proof of his amorous disposition. Indeed it seems as if our Poet entirely abandoned himself to this passion, even to the utter neglect of his own affairs; so that it is not improbable, he might have recovered his estate and bettered his fortune, had he been a man of the least application to business: But this is not commonly the Poet's merit. *TIBULLUS* had several other Mistresses, and Intrigues of all kinds, which seemed the whole business.

The LIFE of TIBULLUS. 33

Business of his Life, and is hinted at in the following Distich :

*Ussit amatorem Nemesis lasciva Tibullum,
In tota juvit quem nihil esse Domo.*

And fortune favoured him as he desired; for, dying at Rome, Delia and Nemesis both joined in expressing the greatest tenderness and affection for him at his funeral. Ovid has agreeably introduced them contending together, which had the greatest share in his heart; and seems to intimate it was shortly after his former distemper.

*Sed tamen hoc melius quam si Phæacia tellus
Ignotum vili supponisset humo.* Ovid. Lib. 3. El. 9.

His Mother and Sister are afterwards described, as closing the eyes of our deceased Poet; the passage is very moving, and much to TIBULLUS's Honour; therefore I shall present the Reader with it.

*Hinc certè madidos fugientis pressit ocellos
Mater, & in cineres ultima dona tulit.
Hinc soror in partem misera cum matre doloris
Venit inornatas dilaniata comas.
Cumque tuis sua junxerunt Nemesisque priorque
Oscula, nec solos destituere rogos.* Ibid.

THIS is what our Poet himself had requested, and the fear of not enjoying this satisfaction, was what most afflicted him during his sickness in Corcyra.

*Abstineas, mors atra, precor, non hic mihi mater,
Quæ legat in mæstos ossa perusta sinus;
Non soror Assyrios cineri quæ dedat odores;
Et fleat effusus ante sepulcra comis.* El. 3. Lib. 1.

As to his Character, Horace gives him that of a fine Writer and good Critick.

Alibi

34 The LIFE of TIBULLUS.

*Albi, nostrorum sermonum candide iudex,
Quid nunc te dicam facere in regione Pedana?
Scribere quod Cassi Parmensis opuscula vincat.*

Ep. Lib. Ep. 4.

THIS *Cassius* of *Parma* was a celebrated Elegiac Poet of that age; who, for siding with *Brutus* and *Cassius*, was put to death after their defeat by order of *Augustus*. Nor is *Ovid* sparing of his praises to *TIBULLUS*.

Flebilis indignos, Elegeia, solve capillos,

*Ille tui vates operis, tua fama, Tibullus
Ardet in extructo corpus inane rogo.*

Ovid. Am. El. 9. Lib. 3.

HE finely describes the sweetness and elegance of our Poet's Elegies, by introducing *Cupid* and *Venus* mourning at his death.

*Ecce, puer Veneris fert eversamque pharetram,
Et fractos arcus, & sine luce facem.
Aspice, demissis ut eat miserabilis alis,
Pectoraque infesta tundat aperta manu.
Excipiunt sparsi lachrymas per colla capilli,
Oraque singultu concutiente sonant.
Fratris in Aenea sic illum funere dicunt
Egressum tectis, pulcher Iule, tuis.
Nec minus est confusa Venus moriente Tibullo,
Quam juveni rupit cum ferus inguen aper.*

Ibid.

AFTER this Encomium, *Ovid* places him in the Elysian Fields, in company with *Calvus*, *Catullus*, and *Gallus*. The best Criticks have preferred this Writer to *Ovid*, for the politeness and elegance of his style; and in general look upon him as the Pattern of an easy and correct stile. But on the other hand, he sometimes wants the delicacy of sentiments, and the fine turn of thought, which was *Ovid's* peculiar happiness. They agree in the same easy natural manner of writing, except where the latter affects to be too witty. Pro-

pertinens

The LIFE of TIBULLUS. 35

Propertius's Style is too laboured and studied; he affects every now and then to shew his learning more than suits with the elegiac softness; insomuch that some have thought he owed great part of his success more to a diligent imitation of the Greek Writers, than to the force of his own genius: But certainly to imitate well is no easy task, nor to be done without genius. *Virgil* was never less esteemed by good judges for having imitated *Homer*. But to return to *TIBULLUS*, it must be granted his Elegies are the most perfect of the three, as having many beauties and no faults; and we may justly with *Ovid* conclude in their favour,

*Donec erunt ignes, arcusque Cupidinis arma,
Legentur numeri, culte Tibulle, tui.*

Ovid. Am. El. 9. Lib. 3.

As to their Versification, *TIBULLUS* has a flowing sweetness in his *Hexameters*, which exceeds that of all the Elegiac Writers. *Ovid* was too negligent in his Versification, and *Propertius* too stiff and harsh in his: In the *Pentameter* he has still a greater Excellence; for though *Propertius* has been pretty exact, he has too much affected the cadence of the Greek *Pentameters*, which does not so well agree with the Genius of the Latin Tongue; and *Ovid* is not alike easy and soft in his: Perhaps he naturally wrote with such ease, that he too much neglected to polish and retouch his Pieces; like a fine Woman, who being conscious of pleasing in any dress by her native beauty, borrows little from art to set off her charms. *TIBULLUS* on the other hand, though blest by Nature with all the Graces that form an excellent Poet, justly thought Nature never appeared more truly beautiful, than when cultivated and adorned by Art; and he has accordingly left us in his Works the most perfect form of the true Elegiac Style.

T H E



THE
L I F E
O F
P R O P E R T I U S.



EXTUS AURELIUS PROPERTIUS
was born at *Mevania*, a Town in *Umbria*, as he himself has inform'd us; speaking of the Honour that would redound to that country from his writings.

*Ut nostris tumefacta superbiat Umbria libris,
Umbria Romani patria Callimachi.
Qua nebulosa cavo rorat Mevania saxo.*

SOME say his father was of the Order of Knights, and being a Man of some authority, and siding with *Lucius Antonius*, upon the taking *Perusium*, was made prisoner, and slain, by *Augustus's* order, at the Altar erected to *Julius Caesar*, and his estate forfeited. This happened when *Propertius* was very young.

*Aspice me cui parva domus fortuna relicta est,
Nullus & antiquo Marte triumphus avi.* L. II. El. 25.

And again more fully,

*Ossaue legisti, non illa atate legenda,
 Patris, & in tenues cogeris isse lares :
 Nam tua cum multi versarent rura iuveni,
 Abstulit excultas pertica tristis opes.
 Mox ubi bulla rudi dimissa est aurea collo,
 Matris, & ante deos libera sumpta toga ;
 Tum mihi pauca suo de carmine dictas Apollo,
 Et vetat insano verba tonare foro.* Ibid.

HIS Wit and Learning soon recommended him to the Patronage of *Mecenas* and *Gallus* ; and, among the Poets of his time, he was very intimate with *Ovid*, *Tibullus*, *Bassus*, and *Ponticus*. *Ovid* was often present at this friend's Rehearsals.

*Sape suos solitus recitare PROPERTIUS ignes,
 Fure sodalitii qui mihi iunctus erat.*

WE have no accounts of the circumstances of his life, or the manner of his death ; only he mentions his making a journey to *Athens*, probably in company with *Mecenas*, his Patron, who attended *Augustus* in his progress through Greece ;

Magnum iter ad doctas proficisci cogor Athenas.

It is certain he died young ; those that make him live the longest, carrying his age no higher than forty one. And from the lines above quoted of *Ovid's*, we find he was then dead some time ; and his birth we shall see was but a few years before *Ovid's*. *Lucius Antonius* was defeated the year of Rome DCCXIV, and *Ovid* was born about the year DCCX. *PROPERTIUS*, in the passage above quoted, has told us, he was but young when this misfortune happened ; and that it was some time after before he went to *Rome*, and there, as was usual, hung up to the Household God's the *Bulla Aurea*, a golden ornament, which free-mens children wore about their necks till

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fourteen years of age : so that supposing him twelve years old at his father's death, it will fix his birth in the year of Rome DCCII, and make him but eight years older than Ovid ; and much more it is not likely he should have been, the

Fure sodalium qui mihi junctus erat,

properly expressing such a familiarity as is between persons nearly of the same age. His mistress *Hostia*, whom he celebrates under the counterfeit name of *Cynthia*, is his constant theme ; and *Martial* says She and the Poet were equally beholden to each other ; she for being immortalized in his writings, and he for being animated by her with that noble passion that made him write so well.

*Cynthia, facundi Carmen juvenile PROPERTI,
Accepit famam, nec minus ipsa dedit.*

HE had a House at Rome, on the Esquiline Hill, which we learn from him, on occasion of losing his tablets, wherein he had written some of his best pieces ;

Et dominum Esquilis scribe habitare tuum.

THE great Object of his imitation was *Callimachus*, a famous Greek Elegiac Poet, that flourished under *Ptolemy Philadelphus* King of *Ægypt*. *Catullus* has finely translated one of this Writer's pieces on Queen *Berenice's* hair, which she cut off, and dedicated to *Isis*, putting it in the Temple of that Goddess, on a vow she had made for the safe return of the Prince her Husband, from his Syrian expedition. *Mimnermus* and *Philetas*, were two others whom he likewise admired and followed in his Elegies. From the character of these Writers, we shall be able to judge of that of PROPERTIUS, who has imitated all their Graces very happily. As to that of *Callimachus*, this is thus justly and briefly given by *Ovid* :

*Battiades toto semper cantabitur orbe :
Quamvis ingenio non valet, arte valet.*

Am. El. 15. Lib. I.
The

The LIFE of PROPERTIUS. 39

THERE are some will have it, that here *Ovid* has denied the Greek Poet had any pretensions to Wit or Genius: indeed as to the former, the Greeks are in general inferior to the Latin. But his words don't absolutely assert that *Callimachus* wanted Genius; but that his excellency lay rather in the exactness of his Style, than in the Wit and Turn of his thoughts. *Ovid*, who was himself the wit-tiest of the Roman Poets, has done the Greeks Justice enough in another place, where he expresses his satisfaction, that one of his Mistresses gave his Elegies the preference to *Callimachus's*:

*Est, quæ Callimachi præ nostris rustica dicit
Carmina: cui placeo protinus ipsa placet.*

Am. Lib. II. El. 4.

MIMNERMUS was much ancients than *Callimachus*, living in *Solon's* time; he is looked upon as the Father of Elegy, and said to have invented the Pentameter verse. *Horace* prefers him to *Callimachus*:

*Discedo Alceus puncto illius ille meo quis?
Quis nisi Callimachus! si plus adposcere visus
Fuit Mimnermus.* —————

THE softness and delicacy of his Muse, may be further guess'd at from this other passage of the same Poet's:

*Si Mimnermus uiri censet, sine amore jocisque
Nil est jucundum, vivas in amore jocisque.*

OUR Author for the same Reason makes him take place of *Homer*:

Plus in amore valet Mimnermi versus Homero.

Lib. I. El. 9.

and consequently looked upon him as superior to *Callimachus*, though he acknowledges it honour enough for his Works, to come up to those of that elegant Greek Writer:

E 2

I 119

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*Inter Callimachi sat erit placuisse libellos,
Et cecinisse modis, pure poeta, tuis.* Lib. III. El. 5.

PHILETAS wrote in the time of *Alexander* the Great, and held the third place among the Love-Poets. PROPERTIUS could hardly express the value he had for his writings in a stronger manner than he has done, where having told us, that when he intended to write in Heroick Verse, the triumphs of *Augustus's* reign, *Apollo* forbade him attempting what he was not likely to succeed in, and sent the Muse *Calliope* to instruct him in what he should sing.

*E quarum numero me contigit una Dearum;
Ut reor à facie Calliopea fuit.*

*Contentus niveis semper vestabere Cygnis,
Nec te fortis equi ducet ad arma sonus.*

*Nil tibi sit rauco pratoria classica cornu
Flare, nec Aonium cingere marte nemus.*

*Aut quibus in campis Mariano praelia signo
Stent, & Suetonicas Roma refringat opes:
Barbarus aut Suevo perfusus sanguine Rhennus
Saucia mœrenti corpora vestet aqua.*

*Quippe coronatos alienum ad limen amantes,
Nocturnaque canes ebria signa fuga.*

*Ut per te clausas sciat excantare puellas
Qui volet austeros arte ferire viros.*

*Talia Calliope: lymphisque à fonte petitis
Ora Philetea nostra rigavit aqua.* Lib. III. El. 3.

QUINTILIAN assures us, that PROPERTIUS disputed the prize with *Tibullus*, in the opinion of those of his time. And *Pliny*, the Younger, in one of his Epistles, speaking of *Possennus*, an Elegiack Poet of his acquaintance, and descended from PROPERTIUS, says, he had made him his Model as the best Writer in this kind. In Art and Labour, he certainly exceeded all: but he does not seem altogether so natural, nor does his Verse flow so smoothly as *Tibullus's*; nor have his Elegies a regular design always pursued to the end, for which *Ovid* is justly to be admired. I shall not mention that *Ovid* exceeded him in Wit and

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and fine Turns; since that Writer has as many poor ones, which do him as little credit, as the others do him honour. After all, PROPERTIUS first shewed the way, and the others had the benefit of improving the hint from him. Not to mention the advantage Ovid and Tibullus had in a large fortune, which gave them both an Ease and Delicacy in their Writings, which all his Art could never come up to. But PROPERTIUS will be satisfied to be ranked with the Greek Poets he imitated, which no one can, in justice, refuse him, that has examined his Style carefully, and made the comparison: this was all his ambition, and he deserves the highest commendation, that attains to what he has proposed, and does not fall short in his undertaking.

*Callimachi manes, & Coi sacra Phileta,
In vestrum quoque me sinite ire nemus, Lib. III. El. 1.*



E 3

THE



THE
L I F E
O F
V I R G I L.



It is natural, upon reading a good Author, to have a curiosity of being acquainted with his person, life, and fortune; and, if his merit be extraordinary, this increases upon us so far, that we even interest our selves in his affairs; and in some measure, share his good or ill fortune with him. This Zeal has carried some too far, and put them upon inventing several surprizing particulars, which probably never happened to those they have attributed them to. This is the case of *Homer* and *Virgil*; who, having justly gained the admiration of all ages, by their writings, have been represented, through the fondness of some of their admirers, almost like knight errants. Of this stamp, are the many fictions in *Herodotus's* life of *Homer*; and *Donatus's*, as 'tis vulgarly called, *Life of VIRGIL*. They may perhaps have some small foundation in truth; but that is so disguised by many fabulous circumstances, that it is no easy matter to make a right choice and distinction between them. According to these
Writers,

writers, nature could not produce those great Genius's, without discovering by some miracle, at their birth, what the world was afterwards to expect from them ; and, as if it were too ordinary a circumstance for them to be legally begotten, they are said to have been both Bastards. In short, as in their Writings, they have outdone all that came before, or after them ; so, in the common occurrences of life, they must necessarily have met with several extraordinary accidents.

MR. POPE has sufficiently exposed this folly, in his Life of *Homer*. I shall be content to censure some few fictions of this nature, as they may occur to me in this account of VIRGIL ; referring the Reader for the rest to *Donatus's* Life of the Poet, or that prefixed to Mr. *Dryden's* translation of his Works : That Writer though with a little more discretion than the other, seems to have given too much into such fabulous accounts.

NOR are they agreed about those fictions, each Writer changing them for others at will ; and applying such things to them, as they imagined either had, or ought to have happened to them ; hereby occasioning an obscurity and confusion, not easily to be cleared up or unravelled, by those who endeavour to speak with more certainty or probability of the matter. For this reason, several persons, upon comparing the different accounts given of the birth and parentage of VIRGIL, have been led to question the truth of all, and this is not altogether so unreasonable as some pretend : For indeed, whilst one tells us his father was a citizen of *Mantua*, another a countryman, a third, a hired servant, or a mountebank's fool, a man cannot easily tell which to credit.

WHAT may be thence inferred as most probable is, that he was at best but of mean extraction, born at *Andes*, a small hamlet in the *Mantuan* territory, three miles from that city, on the fifteenth of *October*, the year of *Rome* DCLXXXIV. His father was probably a man of some parts, but no fortune, which he made perhaps by marrying his master's daughter. There is some dispute about his name, which I take to have been VIRGIL : We are pretty well assured his mother's name was *Maja*. Their circumstances were not such as would enable them to make a figure in

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the world, nor so low, as to make them want the conveniencies of life; or their children a good education. Many surprizing things are related concerning the manner of his birth; as among others, that his mother dreamt she brought forth an olive branch, which was no sooner set in the ground but it took root, and sprang up into a full grown tree, abounding with fruit and blossoms; and that going out next day to a neighbouring village with her husband, she was obliged to stop by the way, and was delivered of him in a ditch. The child is said not to have cried upon his first coming into the world, like other babes, but to have appeared with such a smiling countenance, as promised something very extraordinary of him hereafter. They add, that a branch of Poplar, being (according to the custom of the country,) set in the place where his mother was delivered of him, sprang up and grew so fast, that it soon came up to the size of the other trees set thereabouts long before it.

THIS tree was called after his name, and consecrated to him, which gave occasion to a great deal of superstition in the neighbouring parts; the *Tuscans*, being more peculiarly addicted to it, as pretending to be best acquainted with the several rites and ceremonies of Religion. It is certain, our Poet's birth-day was kept with great solemnity in after times, as we shall have occasion more particularly to mention in the *Life of Statius*.

IT was thought at that time, a necessary circumstance in the history of a great Man's life, and proper to raise the peoples admiration and opinion of him, to mention something extraordinary that attended his birth; from this opinion, the most trivial accidents came to be looked upon as ominous and portentous. Of this there are numberless instances in *Livy*: But as *VIRGIL*'s merit will not suffer with men of sense, granting these stories to be fabulous, I think the bare mentioning, without insisting any farther upon them, may suffice: For had there been more, they would but faintly have intimated those superior excellencies which discovered themselves afterwards in his character and writings.

IT is likely, that the early notices he gave of his sweet temper and fine Genius, induced his parents to spare no cost

cost nor provision they could make for his education. As he seemed likely to make great progress therein, it was thought proper to send him at seven years of age, to study at *Cremona*, a flourishing Roman colony; whence he was removed for a farther improvement to *Milan*. There he applied himself to learn the Greek Language, and to the study of Physick, Mathematicks, and Philosophy; which last he learned under *Syro* the Epicurean, whose doctrine he has fully set out in his sixth Eclogue, inscribed to *Varus*, who studied with him at the same time under the same master. This I take to be undeniably true, whatever Mr. Dryden may have asserted to the contrary, in his Preface to the *Pastorals*.

SYRO was an excellent Philosopher, and one of the greatest Men of the Epicurean Sect, as *Cicero* has assured us; and we may learn from him and other Writers, that it was the most in vogue at that time in *Rome*, and embraced by the greatest Men there: And though *Virgil's* maturer judgment and good sense induced him to forsake it for the Platonick Philosophy, as is plain from Lib. IV. of the *Georgicks*, and the sixth of the *Æneids*; yet it is highly probable he still held their Tenets, when he first wrote his *Georgicks*, as appears from that famous passage in Book II.

*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes & inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.*

Happy the man, who studying nature's laws,
Thro' known effects can trace the secret cause:
His mind possessing in a quiet state,
Fearless of fortune, and resign'd to fate. DRYDEN.

THIS translation is far from giving the true sense of the Author, which manifestly alludes to the following passage of *Lucretius*, whom VIRGIL so frequently imitates,

*Quare religio pedibus subjecta vicissim
Obteritur; nos exequat victoria cælo.*

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As this Sect was so much followed, and he studied at *Milan*, where *Syro* then taught with so much applause, it is no wonder if he was brought up under that Philosopher, as the best Master they could get him.

IF, as some say, when *VIRGIL* had finished his Studies, his curiosity and desire of knowledge, led him to travel through *Italy* into *Naples*, no doubt he took *Rome* in his way; and then he might have published the sixth Eclogue, which *Roscius* rehearsing upon the Theatre at *Rome*, *Cicero* in admiration, called him

—— *Magna spes altera Roma :*

that is, as he himself had carried the Roman eloquence to the highest pitch, the Author of that Poem promised to bring their Poetry to as great a perfection.

BUT it seems more agreeable to history, and what he says of himself in the first Eclogue, that he had not seen *Rome* 'till that division of lands, which *Augustus* made in *Italy* to his soldiers, by which the Poet being involved in the common calamity, lost his patrimony.

As he had studied with *Varus*, and no doubt cultivated a friendship with him, great Genius's soon taking an affection for each other, from the similitude of their minds and studies, he might entertain some hopes by that nobleman's means to recover what he had lost. *Varus's* interest was at that time pretty considerable with *Augustus*; and besides that, he was intimately acquainted with *Pollio*, who was then governor of that province. But *Varus* had a stronger motive than this, to help our Poet in his necessity. Gratitude laying an indissoluble tie on generous spirits; and it is said, that *VIRGIL* wrote a Tragedy, which he suffered to appear in the world under his friend's name. This was enough to incline him to assist *VIRGIL*, and use his interest with *Pollio*, and at court for him. *Pollio*, though on *Anthony's* side, was a man of such merit and consideration, that he was chosen to be the principal person to assist in making up the differences between *Anthony* and *Augustus*, who afterwards, upon the defeat and death of *Anthony*, put that confidence in *Pollio*, as to give him

him the most important employments and honours in the Empire.

SUPPORTED with this double recommendation, VIRGIL went to *Rome*, and made his application at Court, which succeeded to his desire; he, full of gratitude, composed his first Eclogue. *Pseudo-Donatus's* relation of his first acquaintance at Court, and introduction to *Augustus*, is too ridiculous to mention. Soon after he seems to have written his ninth, which appears to be made up in some haste, out of several loose Poems he had already by him, and that on the following occasion. Having obtained a grant from *Augustus*, by which his lands were exempted from the general division, as he declares in the first Eclogue;

*Hic illum vidi juvenem, Melibae, quotannis
Bis senos cui nostra dies altaria sumant.
Hic mihi responsum primus dedit ille petenti;
Pascite, ut ante, boves, pueri submitte tauros.*

There first the youth of heav'nly birth I view'd,
For whom our monthly victims are renew'd.
He heard my vows, and graciously decreed
My grounds to be restor'd, my former flocks to feed.

And returning joyfully from *Rome*, in order to put this grant in execution, when he came there, one *Arius* a Centurion, to whose lot his lands were fallen, not only refused to comply with the Emperor's Mandate, but likewise handled him so roughly, that he was forced to escape for his life by swimming a-cross the *Mincius*, and hasten back to Court, to complain of the contempt shewn the Imperial Orders, and the ill usage he had personally met with.

PEACE being at length made between *Anthony* and *Augustus*, and *Pollio* then Consul, having a Son born to him before he went out of his Consulship; VIRGIL, whose grievances were now fully redressed, and he settled through *Pollio's* means, in *Augustus* and *Mecenas's* favour, wrote his fourth Eclogue, which contains so fine a compliment to *Augustus*, upon the happy effects of the present peace, and to *Pollio* upon the birth of his Son, that

several have judg'd he spoke prophetically of the *Messiah*; And indeed this Eclogue has been the subject of many learned men's admiration; and the Christian World have observed these Verses, which he is said to have taken from the Writings of the Cumæan Sybil, to be so very like the celebrated Prophecy of the *Messiah* in *Isaiah*, that they deserve some notice should be taken of them, which shall be done in its due place.

Pollio the next year having successfully made war upon the *Parthini*, a People of *Illyricum*, whilst he is making preparations for his return and triumph, VIRGIL wrote his 8th Eclogue, as we guess by what he alludes to in the beginning of it;

*Tu mihi; seu magni superas jam saxa Timavi,
Sive oram Illyrici legis aquoris, en erit unquam
Ille dies mihi cum liceat tua dicere facta!
En erit ut liceat totum mihi ferre per orbem
Sola sophocleo tua carmina digna cothurno!
A te principium; tibi desinet: accipe jussu
Carmina cœpta tuis, atque hanc sine tempora circum
Inter Victrices Haderam tibi serpere lauros.*

Great *Pollio*, thou, for whom thy Rome prepares
The ready triumph of thy finish'd wars;
Whether *Timavus*, or th' *Illyrian* coast,
Whatever Land or Sea thy presence boast;
Is there an hour in fate reserv'd for me,
To sing thy deeds in numbers worthy thee?
In numters like to thine, could I rehearse
Thy lofty tragick scenes, thy labour'd verse.
The world another *Sophocles* in thee,
* Another *Homer* should behold in me.
Amidst thy Lawrels let this Ivy twine;
Thine was my earliest Muse; my latest shall be thine.

THIS passage informs us, that at *Pollio's* request, our Author undertook his Pastorals, and that he was his first Patron.

* The Reader is desired to take notice this Line is not in the Latin; *Virgil* was too modest a Man to call himself a *Homer*, when he was only writing his Pastorals: but the Translator, having his Head full of *Virgil's* rivaling *Homer*, has here inserted it very indiscreetly.

Patron. We farther learn, that *Pollio* was himself a great Poet, having written several Tragedies, the loss of which we have reason to lament. *Horace* has frequently complimented that great man on the same account; and we may depend upon it, they would never have spoken so much in their praise, had his Pieces not been excellent. It is conjectured by some, that *VIRGIL* composed his third Pastoral about the same time; but I cannot see much ground they have to build their conjectures upon, and therefore shall not trouble the Reader with so idle an enquiry. The year following he composed the tenth and last Pastoral, as he says himself in the first line;

Extremum hunc, Arethusa, mihi concede laborem;

Thy sacred succour, *Arethusa*, bring,
To crown my labour, 'tis the last I sing.

HAVING by this time sufficiently ingratiated himself with his great Patrons, *Pollio*, *Mecenas*, and *Augustus*, who not only set him above want, but gave him enough to enjoy his studies at leisure, and by retiring to *Naples* consult his Health (which did not permit him to stay long at *Rome*, the air not agreeing with his constitution), he still paid the same regard to their commands; and at *Mecenas* and *Augustus*'s request, undertook the *Georgicks*. Though probably the plan might have been partly laid before at *Milan*; the precepts of that Work, in the opinion of many learned men, better suiting with that soil than *Naples*. But perhaps this might have been occasioned by the love he bore his native country, which he took all occasion to honour; and therefore that might incline him to adapt his precepts of agriculture to it, that they might be in a more peculiar manner beneficial to it. *Augustus* could not but be well pleased to see a Work of this nature carried on at a time when he had a mind to settle the people, and incline them more particularly to the improvement of their lands, which had very much suffered during the late Civil Wars in *Italy*, which had lasted so many years; and therefore rendering all possessions very precarious, discouraged the proprietors from cultivating their lands; not knowing whether they or strangers should reap the fruits

fruits of their labour, which experience had taught them, was too frequently the case.

BESIDES, *Augustus* was once in great danger of his life in a popular sedition at *Rome*, for want of Corn: It was therefore agreeable to the policy and magnificence of this Prince, after having settled his subjects in the quiet and undisturbed possession of their lands, to encourage a work that concurred with, and promoted his design, and was likely to prove so universally beneficial, and instrumental to the welfare of his people, and the glory of his Empire.

VIRGIL spent seven years in writing his *Georgicks*, ending them when *Augustus* was upon his return from the conquest of *Ægypt*; which he reduced into the form of a Province, and made *Gallus*, another Friend and Patron of VIRGIL's, Governour. Here I cannot but observe, that all this Author's Patrons were themselves men of great parts and learning, and most of them excellent Poets; such was this *Gallus*, being perhaps the finest Elegiack Writer among the *Romans*: but his Works are now lost; those that are extant under his name being rejected by the best Criticks for a modern Composition. *Augustus* himself was not only a great Orator, but also a good Poet; having composed some Plays and other Pieces, that were much esteemed by the best judges of those and after times. But to return to our subject: the reduction of *Ægypt*, upon the death of *Anthony* and *Cleopatra*, compleated *Augustus*'s triumphs, and left him peaceable master of the world. That VIRGIL had ended them by this time, appears from the conclusion of that Work, which was one of the finest compliments that was ever made to any Prince.

*Cæsar dum magnus ad altum
Fulminat Euphratem bello, victorque volentes
Per populos dat jura, viamque affectat Olympo:
Illo Virgilium me tempore dulcis alebat
Parthenope, studiis florentem ignobilis oti.*

While mighty *Cæsar*, thund'ring from aſar,
Seeks on *Euphrates*' banks the ſpoils of war,

With conqu'ring arts asserts his country's cause,
 With arts of peace the willing People draws;
 On the glad earth the golden age renews,
 And his great father's path to heav'n pursues.
 Whilst I at *Naples* pass my peaceful days,
 Affecting studies of less noisy praise. DRYDEN.

It is said, that having compleated his *Georgicks*, he met *Augustus* at *Atella*, a Town in *Campania*, where he read the Poem to him with all the graces of good utterance and elocution; but his voice failing him towards the end (for he had but weak Lungs, and was very asthmatick,) *Mecenas* generously supplied his place, and read it out; which no less argued the extraordinary merit of the Poet, than the rare condescension of the Patron.

SOME have made no scruple to question, whether ever *Gallus* (who having offended *Augustus* by his exactions and oppression in his government, and not enduring the disgrace that was likely to ensue for his crimes, flew himself) took up so large a part of the fourth Book of the *Georgicks*, as answered to the *Episode* of *Aristeus*; since it seems so artfully interwoven with the former subject, that it is not likely it could have been so neatly inserted afterwards, as it is pretended to have been by the command of *Augustus*: Not to say that it had appeared indecent for the Author to bestow so many lines in commendation of *Gallus*, when he applied so few to *Mecenas*, to whom he inscribed the whole Work. But to set this objection aside, it is manifest from *Suetonius*, that *Augustus* had still too great a value for that unhappy man, to have so severely persecuted his memory. On the contrary, the Historian assures us, the Emperor loudly complained of the Senate's cruelty, who had found him guilty of the crimes laid to his charge. This *Augustus* would never have done, had *Gallus* been so odious to him, that he would even destroy the remembrance that such a one had ever been. But I shall shew the absurdity of this notion more largely, when we come to examine the *Georgicks*. In this Work VIRGIL has even excelled himself, and finished it in seven years; for such a subject seemed rather to furnish a Writer with an opportunity of

of shewing his learning, than displaying the graces of Poetry; which he has however done in so admirable and sublime a manner, that after ages have esteemed this the most complete of all his Works. *Hesiod*, his predecessor in this kind of writing, never proposed this to himself, deterred by the almost insuperable difficulty of such an attempt; having good reasons to conceive it next to impossible to reconcile the most lively and ornamental parts of Poetry with the simplicity of plain and common precepts of agriculture.

HAVING thus first paid what he owed to his Country's interest, here our Author begins to think of her honour; which, with that of his Prince, he resolves to consecrate to immortality, and to give posterity a just idea of both: and being now in the forty-second year of his age, he sets about the *Æneid*.

PERHAPS he had laid together the materials long before, to which he seems to have alluded in his sixth Pastoral:

*Cum canerem reges & praelia, Cynthia aurem
Vellit, & admonuit, pastorem, Tityre, pingues
Pascere oportet oves, deductum dicere carmen,*

But when I try'd her tender voice, too young,
And fighting kings, and bloody battles sung,
Apollo check'd my pride, and bid me feed
My fat'ning flocks, nor dare beyond the reed.

DRYDEN.

SOME have rather imagined he intended only to write a Poem of the *Alban Kings*, and their wars, 'till the city was razed, and the People carried to *Rome*. But it is more likely he had so noble a design as the *Æneid* before him, but had a mind to try the strength of his Muse in lesser subjects first, still as it were preluding to that greater and more important one.

AND now he is wholly taken up in carrying on this Work, which made a great noise in the world long before its appearance, and raised a general expectation of a *Nescio*
quid

quid majus Iliade, something that was even to surpass the *Iliad*.

Pseudo-Donatus indeed informs us, that *Augustus* interrupted his retirement, and, when he deliberated whether he should lay down the reins of Empire, and restore the Commonwealth, or continue in his imperial authority; being dissatisfied with what advice his favourites *Agrippa* and *Mecenas* were able to give him in so ticklish a point, sent for our Poet from *Naples*, and was by him determined not to part with his power. But this story seems highly improbable; and however the Monarch might honour our Author with his familiarity and conversation at such times as he was disposed to unbend his mind, as he did *Horace*, between whom he would sometimes sit to divert himself, jestingly saying, *he was situated between sighs and tears*; it is another thing to give him the preference to his first Ministers, and those of his Council, to the latter of whom that Prince never intrusted so important a secret. Nor, were this true, would it much rebound to our Poet's Honour, to have been the Author of such advice, which better suited *Mecenas's* policy and court wisdom. For after all that can be said for and against this matter, if *Mecenas's* answer had more of the Statesman and Courtier, that of *Agrippa* had more of the Roman.

VIRGIL, notwithstanding he knew as well as any one how to pay his court to his Prince, yet in his heart was too true a Roman to give such advice; and has given the best place in *Elysium* to such as spilt their blood in their Country's service; and made the younger *Cato*, that great antagonist of *Caesar's*, give laws to the blessed; and, speaking of the civil wars, *Anchises* reproves his descendant *J. Caesar* for engaging in the ruin of his Country.

He had better and less dishonourable methods of pleasing *Augustus*. He has not only given his whole character under that of *Aeneas*, but in the body of the Poem has frequently alluded to several actions of note done by him at that time; which, though perfectly adapted to the plan of his Poem, are not so closely veiled but the fine compliment, therein paid to his great benefactor, is constantly discernable. Such in particular are the Trojan Games,

Games, which *Æneas* celebrates in the third Book, and are exactly the same with those instituted by *Augustus* in memory of the victory at *Actium*. But this is a trifle with our author, who has wrought into his work the whole compass of the *Roman* History, with that of the several nations of *Italy*, from the earliest times down to his own; and that in so authentick a manner as to deserve the title of the *Roman Historian*, much better than *Homer* did that of *Writer of the Trojan War*; most Authors after him among the *Romans*, according to *Macrobius*, submitting rather to his authority in any controverted point, than to the most learned Historians, or the Chronicles of their Priests, which were composed by order of the State.

HAVING spent about seven years in the first six Books, he is thought at the pressing instances of *Augustus* and *Octavia*, to have rehearsed his sixth Book to them: This happened not long after the death of *Marcellus*, whom *Augustus* had intended for his successor in the Empire, a Prince of great hopes. The artful Poet on this occasion is thought to have ingeniously inserted the admirable passage relating to him, that begins, *O nate ingentem luctum ne quere tuorum*; and to have recited it in so moving a manner, that *Octavia* the best of Mothers, and the best and most abused of Wives, being seized with grief, fell into a swoon. Upon her recovery, she ordered the Poet ten thousand Sesterces for every line; a pretty round sum for less than thirty Verses; amounting to two thousand one hundred Pounds, and upwards, of our money. But the Verses were *VIRGIL's*, and a great Emperor's Sister and a very generous Princess the donor.

FROM this time forward 'till death he continued to perfect the *Æneid*, which he finished about four years afterwards, and then set out for *Greece*; resolving at his leisure to correct it; intending when it had received his last hand, and he had finished his travels, to dedicate the remainder of his life to the study of Philosophy, to which he had as great an inclination as he had genius for Poetry; which he is said in his Letters to *Augustus*, to have stiled the Work of a degenerate age; reproving thereby not so much that Art, as the perverseness of human nature, that

must be drawn and allured to the love and practice of virtue, which he with his Master *Plato* thought amiable enough in itself to engage us in its service. His great love of Philosophy, and the study of Nature, he has finely described in his second *Georgick*, with an uncommon warmth.

*Me vero primum dulces ante omnia musæ,
Quarum sacra fero ingenti percussus amore,
Accipiant, cœlique vias & sidera monstrent;
Defectus solis, varios lunaque labores;
Unde tremor terris; qua vi maria alta tumescant
Obicibus ruptis, rursusque in seipsa residant.
Quid tantum Oceano properent se tingere soles
Hyberni, vel quæ tardis mora noctibus obstet.*

Ye sacred Muses, with whose beauty fir'd
My soul is ravish'd, and my brain inspir'd;
Whose Priest I am, whose holy fillets wear;
Would you your Poet's first petition hear:
Give me the ways of wand'ring Stars to know;
The depths of Heav'n above, and stars below;
Teach me the various labours of the Moon,
And whence proceed th' eclipses of the Sun;
Why flowing tides prevail upon the main,
And in what dark recesses they shrink again;
What shakes the solid Earth, what cause delays
The Summer nights, and shortens Winter days.

DRYDEN.

THIS whole passage, to the end of the Book, is so sublime, and at once so perfectly discovers the Poet's insatiable desire of knowledge; his love of retirement, and aversion to business, the simplicity of his manners, and the humanity of his temper. and moderation of mind; that I know no passage in all his Works, where he shews the true cast of his mind better, or the force of his Art; so that I refer the curious Reader to it.

We left our Author setting out for *Greece*, where he had not been long, when his curiosity carrying him to *Megara*, he was there seized with a languishing distemper.

Being

Being willing to wait upon *Augustus* home, who was now returning from his Eastern Progress, he neglected it too much at first on that account; so that the disorder increasing upon him a-ship-board, he just reached *Brundisium*, where he died immediately after his landing, and was buried at *Naples*, agreeably to his own request. His best friends attended him in his last moments; when it was his greatest concern that he had left the *Æneid* unfinished, or rather incorrect; and he earnestly called for his Papers to burn them, which he would have done notwithstanding the remonstrances of all about him, had not *Augustus* himself kindly interposed in their behalf, with a solemn promise, that the Work should be left as it was, without the least Emendations; which *Tucca* and *Varius*, to whose charge the publishing the *Æneid* was committed, most faithfully observed; not so much as filling up any of the Hemistichs or Half-verses he had left. He is said just before his death to have written his own Epitaph, as it was the custom of the age for men of note to do. The modesty of the man is very conspicuous in that distich, if it be his:

*Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere; tenet nunc
Parthenope: cecini Pasæa, Rura, Duces.*

I sung Flocks, Tillage, Heroes; *Mantua* gave
Me Life, *Brundisium* Death, *Naples* a Grave.

He was of a tall stature, and swarthy complexion, which some would have him derive from his Father, who was of a more southern extraction, and possibly if not a slave a *Neapolitan*; which might be one reason our Author so much delighted in that City, which nevertheless could not tempt him to forget his native Country. His air was clownish and ungraceful, and his whole deportment awkward and ungenteel. This might be partly owing to the obscurity of his birth, and partly to the ill state of his health, which allowing him the use of little or no exercise, robbed him of those graces of body that are owing to it. Besides, his bashfulness (which was such as made him shun the eyes of every observer, as a criminal

criminal those of his Judge, and often made him retire and hide himself in a Shop, when people pointed at him as he passed the streets of *Rome*;) this did not a little contribute to increase that defect.

HE was of so weak a constitution, that he was reduced to a very abstemious course of life, eating very little, and drinking no wine. Being a Person of excellent Sense, he could not bear the impertinent Wits of the age; and his ill habit of body might contribute to increase this pettish humour. For, besides a weak stomach, he was troubled with frequent head-aches, and spitting of blood, and was so asthmatick, he could not endure the Air of *Rome*, which forced him to retire to *Naples*, where he spent most of the latter part of his life: However, he was a Man of much humanity, gratitude, and good nature. Two favourite Youths that served him, he nobly rewarded, and sent them away well instructed; *Alexander* became a famous Grammarian, and *Cebes* a good Poet and Philosopher. His gratitude to his Patrons, his Works sufficiently testify; and he showed his Piety to his Parents, by sending them annually such supplies, as long as they lived, as gave them reason to thank Providence, who had blessed them with such a Son. He was very generous to his other Relations, to whom he resigned his patrimony, and gave them many other marks of his liberality. He tenderly loved an only Brother, whose early death he lamented in his fifth Pastoral at first, though he afterwards applied it, with some alteration, to *Julius Caesar*.

NOTWITHSTANDING these liberalities, and his modesty, which made him refuse many favours which the bounty of his Patrons was always ready to heap upon him, he died very rich, leaving near seventy five thousand pounds behind him; which, by his Will, was to be one half distributed among his relations, and the other to *Mecenas*, *Tucca*, and *Varius*, besides a considerable legacy to *Augustus*; that politic Prince having introduced a custom of being in every body's Will. He was a Man of such singular chastity, that they gave him the name of *Parthenias*, the Virgin, in his life-time; not that he was naturally insensible to the soft passion of Love, his Episode of *Dido* and *Aeneas*, treating that passion with more delicacy

cacy than *Anacreon*, and as much softness as *Ovid*. Yet he so far commanded his natural inclination, that he rejected the embraces of the beautiful *Plotia*, whom his friend would have thrown into his arms, and by the help of his philosophy, improved it into friendship, to which he was very sensible, and is therefore called *Optimus*, the best of friends, by *Horace*, speaking of *VIRGIL*'s introducing him to the acquaintance of *Mecenas*; for his friendship was not only warm in its sentiments, but active and zealous to serve those that had any share in it. Being so fond of retirement, which he spent entirely in the improving of his mind, and the service of the Muses, he thereby became not only the greatest Poet, but the greatest Philosopher, Historian, Antiquary, and the most general Scholar of his age. He had naturally a great hesitation in his speech, which he was nevertheless able to conquer upon occasion, as in the rehearsing of his Writings; though this perhaps might be the reason he left the Bar so soon, where he never pleaded but once. He was intimately acquainted with most of the great Men, and Wits of *Rome*, as we find him sometimes mentioned in company with several of them in *Horace*, who is thought to have given us his character in the following lines.

—— *Iracundior est paullo, minus aptus acutis
Naribus horum hominum; rideri possit, eo quod
Rusticius tonsa toga defluit, & male latus
In pede calceus haeret, at est bonus, ut melior vir
Non alius quisquam; at tibi amicus, at ingenium ingens
Inculto latet hoc sub corpore* ——

Perhaps he's pettish, and he's apt to rage,
He cannot bear the rail'ry of the age;
Perhaps he does not wear his clothes genteel;
His shoe is not well made, nor fits it well:
He may be flouted, and be jeer'd for this,
Yet he's an honest man as any is:
He is thy friend, and tho' the case be foul,
It holds a learned and a noble soul. *Sat. Lib. 1. Sat. 3.*

CREECH.

Though

THOUGH *Horace* survived *VIRGIL*, it was not long enough to see the *Aeneid*, at least we have no pieces of his extant, that make any mention of it. Had he seen that Work, he would never have set *Varius* at the head of Epick Poets, though doubtless his merit was very considerable that way. What he has said of our Author, manifestly refers only to his Pastorals and *Georgicks* at most.

————— *Molle atque facetum*
Virgilio annuerint gaudentes rure Camœna.

IN which place, according to *Quintilian*, the word *facetum*, signifies the peculiar elegance and purity of his Style, and not that his Works were full of mirth and pleasantry.

HAVING thus given a general account of his person, life, and writings, I shall come to examine the latter more particularly, according to their different kinds, and consider them as they are to be compared with the works of the three celebrated Greek Poets, *Homer*, *Hesiod*, and *Theocritus*. But it being too great a task to attempt a regular parallel, I shall only endeavour to shew, as it occurs to me on taking a review of his Works, wherein he has excelled, or equalled, or been inferior to them.

To begin with his Pastorals, as being first in order of time, and describing that innocent simplicity which was the Blessing of the first Ages of the World :

Ante etiam sceptrum dictæ regis, & ante
Impia quam casis gens est epulata juvencis,
Aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat.

E'er *Saturn's* rebel-son usurp'd the skies,
When beasts were only slain for sacrifice :
While peaceful *Crete* enjoy'd her ancient Lord.

HERE, though the Muse is humble, she is not mean ; though not polite, yet not clownish ; though her garb is not magnificent, her dress is decent and modest, and such as we may suppose her's to be whom *Horace* describes by his *Simplex Munditiis*. Many have been the attempts

to hit upon this happy Simplicity of Style, but none of the ancients have truly succeeded in it, but *Theocritus* and *VIRGIL*. Among the Moderns, *Tasso's Aminta* has been justly admired in this way of writing, much superior to, as being more natural, than the *Pastor Fido* of *Guarini*, which is too genteel in its characters, and too lively and full of affected Wit in the sentiments, as well as too florid in the expressions. Among our countrymen, *Spencer's* Genius was every way equal to this kind of Writing; and his *Shepherd's Calendar* is a most exact and beautiful picture of nature. But still it may be objected, that though he has happily enough imitated the *Dorick* dialect used by *Theocritus* in his Style, the language, after all, appears rather too low and clownish, and sometimes wants that smoothness which is so essential to the Pastoral Style. Others have fallen into the contrary extremity; and, shunning his rudeness in their Style, have made their shepherds courtiers, and their shepherdesses ladies of fashion. In this we have imitated our neighbours, who are too apt to turn fops to appear well-bred, and despise *Homer* for the ill-manners of *Achilles* and *Agamemnon*. I look upon Mr. *Philips* to have best succeeded among us in his Pastorals, who has not entirely affected the rural Dialect, nor altogether neglected it. In general, a perfection in this kind of Writing, seems with more difficulty attainable by the Moderns than the Ancients, since our manners are in every respect more sophisticated by what we call civility and good breeding, than theirs were; so that when we go to lay this politeness aside, we know not how to forbear being downright rude: like a vain Man, that having been always used to a magnificent dress, knows not how to keep his countenance in a plain sute. Even in *VIRGIL's* time, the *Romans* were not so entirely degenerated from the frugality of their ancestors, and their plain way of living, but that *Horace* durst glory in the mean furniture of his table, though a polite Courtier, and one that could have obtained any thing from his Prince's favour. And no wonder he did it, since *Augustus* himself would be content 'till supper with a crust of bread and a glass of wine. They had not quite learned at *Rome* to be ashamed of a dictator that held the plough, their taste of life

though

though much improved, was not entirely vitiated by luxury.

BUT to return to VIRGIL's Eclogues : As they are not all composed in the same simplicity of Style and sentiments, some have objected this to him as a fault. But, besides that we might excuse this from the example of *Theocritus*, who does the same in several of his Idylliums ; perhaps it might not be improper to assert of the Pastoral, in some measure what *Horace* does of Comedy, that it sometimes raises its Note, and speaks in a loftier Style than usual.

Interdum tamen & vocem Comœdia tollit.

AND in like manner, the former may sometimes venture upon a nobler Theme than the contention of two shepherds upon their humble pipe. We have a fine instance in VIRGIL's sixth Eclogue. The Poet indeed takes care to preserve the decorum still, by sending his rude and ignorant shepherds to be instructed by the God, and learn from his mouth, the beginning of things, and first formation of the world. It is not so easy to justify the subject of the fourth Eclogue ; though still that chiefly presents you with a rural scene, and a golden age, when the sweating oaks shall drop honey, the purple grape adorn every hedge, the plow-share and pruning-hook become useless, the ox be unyoaked, and the ram not fleeced. And in the beginning, he tells you, he designs to swell a note higher ; and though he sings of rural scenes, to render them worthy a Consul's presence. They that will not take this for an excuse, are to be farther informed, that the word Eclogue, signifies no more than select Pieces, or as one might render it in the modern way, miscellany Poems ; as *Horace's* Odes, that treat of various subjects, were frequently by the ancients called by the same name. Indeed, the Author had need of all the strength of his judgment to correct the fire of his imagination, and moderate the sublimity of his Genius, which naturally inclined him to soar much greater heights : Thus did he discreetly manage his Muse as the Eagle does her young, whose first flights she shortens,

shortens, that he may soar afterwards, and mount the sky with greater ease and security.

WHEN we compare the Latin with the Greek Poet, we must allow the latter to have a softness and delicacy of expression that is owing to the *Dorick* dialect, of which the Latin tongue is not capable, any more than it can sometimes reach the majesty of the *Ionic*. What *Martial* says of the Latin versification, is doubly true, *Musas colimus severiores*; namely, that it neither enjoys those great liberties the Greek language admits of, nor is therefore capable of certain graces which flow from them. This defect the Latin Author has in some degree supplied, by writing with much more regularity and exactness, and keeping up more closely to the plan or design of each Pastoral; the transitions being short, natural, and easy, and arising from the subject before him.

OUR Author has been censured for his second Pastoral, as professing therein a criminal passion for *Alexis*; but his modesty and strict chastity is so evident from all accounts that we have of him, and for which some think he had the Surname of *Parthenius* given him, that it needs no answer: Besides, they that are acquainted with *Socrates's* character, which was exposed to the same scandalous reflections, and know how he has been justified in this matter, will do our Poet the same justice. The Reader that desires to be farther satisfied on this head, may read this matter treated at large, in the Life of *VIRGIL* prefixed to *Dryden's* translation, where he will find this accusation fully answered, and *VIRGIL's* reputation cleared.

ONE thing more to be taken notice of, is the *Sibylline* Prophecy in the fourth Eclogue, which being generally thought to refer to the *Messiah*, deserves to be a little attended to, before we dismiss the Pastorals. Though *VIRGIL* cannot be imagined to understand them otherwise than as he has applied them in a compliment to *Pollo* and his son, under the auspicious reign of *Augustus*.

THE famous story of the *Sibyl* that came to *Tarquin*, need not be repeated here; and that there were such Women, whose Writings were held Prophetical, seems from good authorities to be true. The Reader will meet with a curious dissertation on this head, in *Prideaux's Connection of*
the

the Old and New Testament : This is enough to our present purpose ; we need not enquire what Spirit they were inspired with, nor whether all, or any part, is genuine, and to be attributed to them, of that collection, which now goes under that name.

IT is evident, from the Writers of the *Augustian* age, that about this time there was a general expectation in the world of some great Prince that should come from *Judea*, and conquer the Roman Empire. *Suetonius* and *Tacitus* have both made mention of this, and understood its completion, in the person of *Vespasian*, who was made Emperor, when he was General in those parts.

IT is highly probable, this notion had its original from the Jews, who, for several years before, expected the coming of the *Messiah* ; which they described as to be attended with the pomp and majesty of worldly greatness, as they imagined it would be ; and they being spread abroad in most parts of the *Roman* Empire, and very numerous at *Rome*, and very zealous in making Proselytes, might easily give birth to this notion.

THIS opinion was very much confirmed, when some of those Verses that were collected by publick authority, to supply the loss of the Books of the *Sibyls*, (that were burned in *Sylla's* time with the Capitol) seemed to countenance it so directly, and foretel the same thing : and it is likely it was some of these verses, (of which there were vast numbers scattered up and down in private hands among the curious, 'till *Augustus* some time afterwards, having selected what seemed of most value and importance, and laid them up in the temple of *Apollo*, burnt the rest) that *VIRGIL* having got sight of, thus poetically applied them, in paying his court to *Pollio* his Patron, on the birth of his Son at that time, which more immediately, or rather, only related to the Birth of Christ.

THE subject of the *Georgick* is plain, but of universal benefit. The Poet, who understood nature perfectly well, and was a master of his Art, finding that an account of such of her Works, as he had occasion to speak of, wanted the life and spirit necessary to true Poetry, has animated them all ; endued them with passions, and given them desires

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fires and inclinations. Even vegetables have partaken of his bounty ; and those meaner parts of the creation, he has finely painted so to the life, that they outvie the noblest. Almost every beauty that the Art is capable of, is ingeniously interwoven with the main design ; and while he seems only to instruct you in rural affairs, he furnishes the attentive mind with many excellent improvements in Arts and Sciences. You may see the plan of a well regulated government, formed upon that of a little insect, the Bee. Industry and sobriety, the love of one's country, and a religious frame of mind, are every where inculcated : true merit is justly commended, and the strongest Satire pointed in the second Book against vanity and extravagance.

THE design, as far as we can guess at this distance of time, seems to have been as noble as the subject. It was no less than settling the Commonwealth, that had been long harrassed with civil wars, in a habit of peaceful industry ; and to join the soldiery and common people in one, and the same interest ; the improvement of their lands, and the increase of their fortunes. This was a design worthy *Mecenas's* recommendation, and *VIRGIL's* undertaking, who, to reconcile the soldiery to this new profession of husbandry, artfully displays all the charms of a country life, and their happiness, in being at length, by the wise conduct of their great Prince, freed from civil war, and all its miserable attendants. Having complimented them upon their warlike spirit, he urges to their imitation the example of their frugal ancestors, shewing they were all trained up in the country life ; and this he enforces, from the happy simplicity of *Saturn's* reign, and the golden age.

A LATE Author has ingeniously observed *VIRGIL's* dexterity in treating his *Georgicks*, and thinks that under the type of the Bees in the fourth Book, the Poet designed to give the model of the *Roman* government. Be that as it will, I am sure the notion he has started in favour of the *Georgicks*, is something particular, and what the learned world will hardly come into, but upon better grounds than any he has advanced for their believing it. *VIRGIL*, he tells you, intended to sacrifice the *Aeneid* to the *Georgicks*;

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gicks; the chief authorities he brings you for it, are only these; that VIRGIL has somewhere said, in an Epistle to Augustus, that Epick Poetry was the invention of a degenerate age. From whence he could properly infer no more than this, that Mankind by their corruptions, had diverted Poetry from its first channel, which was either singing hymns to the Gods, or giving useful precepts in life; and had thereby reduced the wise Men, its professors, to a necessity of having recourse to all the powers of invention and imagination, to recommend their instructions to the world. That VIRGIL is said to have wished he had never meddled with Heroick Poetry, can only be taken as an argument of that modesty, which, at his death, condemned the Work to the flames, because it wanted that perfection he would have given it, if he had lived. Then to argue the superiority of the Georgick to the *Aeneid*, because its foundation is truth, is doubly unjust; probable fiction being in all ages looked upon as the Soul of Poetry: What Horace has said particularly of the Greek Satirical Dramatick Poem, holding as true of Epick Poetry.

*Ex noto fictum carmen sequar, ut sibi quisvis
Speret idem: sudet multum frustraue labore
Ausus idem: tantum series juncturaque pollet:
Tantum de medio sumptis accedet honoris.*

I'll take a common theme, and yet excel,
Tho' any man may hope to write as well;
Yet let him try, and he shall sweat in vain;
Idle his labour, fruitless prove the pain:
So great the force of art and method seems;
So much we may improve the common themes.

CREECH.

Fiction indeed, is so evidently necessary in all Poetry, that even Lucan in his *Pharsalia*, the subject of which being so well known allowed no deviation from truth, has introduced several beautiful fictions for the adorning his subject; with this caution only, that they might not prejudice matter of fact. But I would fain know of this Writer, whether the Epifode of *Aristeus*, which

which is a meer fiction, has not been always looked upon as one of the finest pieces of the *Georgicks* : My Lord Bacon's authority, I hope, will decide the matter in dispute between us. I shall quote his own Words, from his *Treatise of the Advancement of Learning* : The whole passage runs thus.

"As for narrative Poesy, or if you please heroical, so you understand it not of the verse, but the matter, it seems to be altogether raised from a noble foundation, which makes for the dignity of man's nature : for, seeing this sensible world is in dignity much inferior to the soul of man, Poesy seems to endow human nature with that which history denies : and to give satisfaction to the mind, with at least the shadow of things, where the substance cannot be had. For if the matter be thoroughly considered, a strong argument may be drawn from Poetry, that a more stately greatness of things, a more perfect order, and a more beautiful variety, delights the soul of man, than any way can be found in nature since the fall. Wherefore seeing the acts and events, which are the subject of true history, are not of that amplitude as to content the mind of man, Poetry is ready at hand to feign acts more heroical ; because true history reports the successes of business, not proportionable to the merits of virtues and vices ; Poetry corrects it, and presents events and fortunes according to desert, and according to the Law of Providence ; because true history, through the frequent satiety and similitude of things, works a distaste and misprision in the mind of man ; Poesy cheareth and refresheth the soul, chanting things rare and various, and full of vicissitudes, so as Poetry serveth and conferreth to delectation, magnanimity, and morality ; and therefore it may seem deservedly to have some participation of Divineness, because it accommodates its images and descriptions to the utmost desire and wish of the soul, not subjecting the mind to things or facts, as reason and history do."

Thus far the excellent Lord Bacon.

FROM hence it is sufficiently manifest, that fiction is essentially necessary to Poetry ; and the *Æneid* therefore far from being blameable on that account.

ON the other hand, I believe most people will grant, that the *Æneid* is also founded on truth, though the building and superstructure be fabulous: Either taking it as an account of the first peopling of *Italy*, and the origin of the *Romans*; or as an adumbration of the finest parts of *Augustus's* life. Surely had VIRGIL intended the *Æneid* as a meer Encomium of that Prince, he might, as *Horace* has done, have made his Panegyrick at several times, and on different occasions, with less expence of time and labour, than the *Æneid* cost him.

WHAT this Author farther argues from VIRGIL's silence of *Homer*, when he had mentioned others that came more in his way, in his *Georgicks* and *Pastorals*, is trifling. He had too much good sense to mention him in an improper place: And there was no handsome occasion of doing it in the *Æneid* neither, unless he had a mind to do by the *Greek* as *Statius* did afterwards by him, own himself his humble follower and admirer. And VIRGIL, with all his modesty, had Wit enough not thus to debase himself and his Poem; since he pretended, in imitating *Homer* only, to improve upon him, as this Gentleman acknowledges. But I shall leave his opinion to be better confuted, when we come to shew the merit of that Poem which he would condemn: The best argument against detraction, being to shew the true worth of what is excepted against. I should not have dwelt so long on this Head, in answer to such an absurd opinion, but that the person who advanced it, seems otherwise a Man of good sense and learning.

BUT to go on with our examination of the *Georgick*: In that Poem our Author has shewn the full extent and reach of his own Genius, and the highest pitch of perfection the *Latin* Poetry is capable of attaining: For though this Work is able to bear no comparison with the *Æneid*, for the Subject it treats of, yet he has handled it with that judicious Art, and uncommon delicacy, as to make it be deservedly reckoned one of the most admirable and perfect Poems that ever was written; and has taught this great truth, or at least confirmed it by his example, that the meanest subject in the hands of a fine Writer, is capable of giving infinite delight: For whether the Poet takes occa-

sion to describe a murrain among the cattle, or the prodigies and prodigies that preceeded *Cæsar's* death, a country-wake, or the pleasures of a rural life, and fatigues of the town, an old man's orchard, or the triumphs of *Augustus*, the battle of the bees, or the art of restoring them; all appears drawn from the Subject, or rather naturally to arise from it, which at the same time, by the help of fine similes, bold metaphors, and noble descriptions, fitly applied, and justly made use of, is great and sublime, and the whole Work uniform and exact. And when one would think the Reader had forgot the instructive lessons of agriculture, to contemplate with more pleasure the Poet's Art, and had thereby frustrated the main end and design of the Work, which was only to convey these lessons and precepts in a more agreeable manner; we find, on the contrary, the Reader more attentive to them, and his understanding not diverted, but enlivened by these beautiful circumstances, which the Poet had to this end inserted, least by the continued inculcating of plain and dry rules of tillage, and heavy descriptions of a plow-share, and other rural instruments, as the Work must have become flat and tasteless, the Reader's mind had been fatigued, and consequently incapable of improvement, for want of a necessary attention.

THIS is too often manifest in *Hesiod*; though our Author generously compliments him in his Eclogues, as we shall see by and by. For though he has not delivered half the rules for husbandry the other has given, yet the Reader can hardly forbear growing dull himself for want of these ornamental transitions, which so much encourage our application in reading a Poet: Like a Man that may play, or sing true enough to his notes, though we can discover in his musick or voice none of those amiable graces that so much recommend the fine Singer, or skilful Musician to us: or a Picture that is drawn according to the rules of Art, of proportion, and perspective, but where the fine colouring, the nice touches, and finishing strokes are wanting.

AMONG the Moderns, *Fracastorius*, in his *Syphilis*, has happily enough imitated our Author's manner; and *Rapin*, in his *Horti*, puts in for his share of praise: but our countryman, Mr. *Philips*, in his *Cyder*, may justly challenge them

them both for a happy imitation of VIRGIL in all those graces which make the true merit of Writings of this kind.

IT were no difficult matter to shew how the *English* Poet traces the *Latin*, and has kept up the dignity of his Style to admiration; making the names of plants, soils, animals and instruments, shine no less in our *English* verse, than VIRGIL in the *Latin*, which naturally is so much more sounding and expressive. Among many beautiful transitions in the *Cyder*, I cannot but take notice of the fine description of that dreadful earthquake, which swallowed up the famous old town of *Ariconium*. The *English* Poet has therein not only finely imitated the *Latin*, but added many noble Ideas of his own. The following noble hint is taken from *Scripture*, being borrowed from the hundred and seventh *Psalms*.

————— The rocking town
Supplants their footsteps; too and fro they reel
Astonish'd, as o'er charg'd with wine. ———

I SHALL only take notice of one more, that is, the fine passage where mentioning our Author's Art intermixing Instruction and Delight, he supports himself for doing so, by the authority of his great example.

————— So *Maro's* Muse,
Thrice sacred Muse! commodious precepts gives;
Instructive to the Swains, not wholly bent
On what is gainful; sometimes she diverts
From solid counsels, shews the force of Love
In savage beasts; how Virgin face divine
Attracts the hapless Youth thro' storms and waves
Alone in deep of night; then she describes
The Scythian winter, nor disdains to sing
How under ground the rude Riphean race
Mimick brisk *Cyder*, with the brake's product wild,
Sloes pounded, hips, and farvice harshlest juice.

BUT to return to VIRGIL: What is more magnificent than his Invocation and Exordium in the first Book of

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of his *Georgicks*; whilst nothing is more simple and artless than that of the *Æneid*? I shall here subjoin both for the Reader's consideration. That of the *Georgicks* runs thus :

*Quid faciat latas segetes : quo sidere terram
Vertere, Mecenas, ulmisque adjungere vites
Conveniat : qua cura boum, qui cultus habendo
Sit pecori : atque apibus quanta experientia parcis,
Hinc canere incipiam. Vos, O clarissima mundi
Lumina, labentem Cœlo, qua ducitis annum :
Liber, & alma Ceres, vestro si munere tellus
Chaoniam pingui glandem mutavit arista,
Poculaque inventis Acheloïa miscuit uvis :
Et vos, agrestum prasentia Numina, Fauni,
Ferte simul Faunique pedem, Dryadesque puella :
Munera vestra cano. Tuque O, cui prima frementem
Fudit equum magno tellus percussa tridenti,
Neptune : & cultior nemorum, cui pinguis Cœa
Ter centum nivei tondent dumeta juvenci,
Ipse nemus linquens patrium, saltusque Lycæi,
Pan ovium custos, tua si tibi Manala cura,
Adsis O Tegeæ favens : oleaque Minerva
Inventrix : uncique puer ministrator aratri !
Et teneram ab radice ferens, Sylvane, cupressum ;
Diique, Deaque omnes, studium quibus arva tueri ;
Quique novas alitis nonnullo semine fruges,
Quique satis largum cœlo dimittitis imbrem.
Tuque adeo, quem mox qua sint habitura deorum
Concilia, incertum est, urbisne invisere, Cæsar,
Terrarumque velis curam, & te maximus orbis
Auctorem frugum, tempestatumque potentem
Accipiat, cingens materna tempora myrto :
An Deus immensi venias maris, ac tua nauta
Numina sola colant : tibi serviat ultima Thule,
Teque sibi generum Tethys emat omnibus undis :
Anne novum tardis fidus te mensibus addas,
Qua locus Erigonen inter, Chelasque sequentes
Panditur : ipse tibi jam brachia contrahit ardens
Scorpius, & cœli justa plus parte relinquit.
Quicquid eris, (nam te nec sperent Tartara regem,*

*Nec tibi regnandi veniat tam dira Cupido :
 Quamvis Elysios miretur Græcia campos,
 Nec repetita sequi curet Proserpina matrem)
 Da facilem cursum, atque audacibus annue cæptis ;
 Ignarosque via mecum miseratus agrestes
 Ingredere, & votis jam nunc assuesce vocari.*

THE former part of this long invocation, gives the Reader a magnificent Idea of the Work ; and the latter is perhaps the finest compliment that was ever paid to any Prince, and over-weight for the greatest favours his Patron and Emperor was able to confer upon him. At the same time the immediate Exordium is contracted within the compass of four lines. Our admiration is already raised, and we naturally expect, after so fine a beginning, something more than dry precepts of Agriculture.

What makes a plenteous Harvest, when to turn
 The fruitful soil, and when to sow the corn ;
 The care of sheep, of oxen, and of kine,
 And how to raise on elms the teeming vine :
 The Birth and Genius of the frugal Bee,
 I sing, *Mecenas*, and I sing to thee.
 Ye Deities ! who fields and plains protect,
 Who rule the seasons, and the year direct :
Bacchus and fost'ring *Ceres*, powers divine,
 Who gave us corn for mast, for water, wine.
 Ye Fawns, propitious to the rural swains,
 Ye Nymphs that haunt the mountains and the plains,
 Join in my work, and to my numbers bring
 Your needful succour, for your gifts I sing.
 And thou, whose trident struck the teeming earth,
 And made a passage for the Courser's birth ;
 And thou, for whom the *Cæan* shore sustains
 Thy mighty herds, that graze the flow'ry plains ;
 And thou, the shepherd's tutelary God,
 Leave for a while, O *Pan*, thy lov'd abode ;
 And if *Arcadian* fleeces be thy care,
 From fields and mountains to my song repair.
 Inventor, *Pallas*, of the fat'ning oil,
 Thou founder of the plough, and ploughman's toil ;

And thou, whose hands the shroud, like cypress rear; }
 Come all ye Gods and Goddesses that wear
 The rural honours, and increase the year.
 You who supply the ground with seeds of grain,
 And you who swell those seeds with kindly rain:
 And chiefly thou, whose undetermin'd state
 Is yet the business of the Gods debate:
 Whether in after-times to be declar'd
 The Patron of the world, and *Rome's* peculiar guard;
 Or o'er the fruit and seasons to preside,
 And the round circuit of the year to guide;
 Pow'rful of Blessings, which thou strew'st around,
 And with thy Goddess mother's myrtle crown'd;
 Or wilt thou, *Cesar*, chuse the wat'ry reign,
 To smoothe the surges, and correct the main?
 Then Mariners, in storms, to thee shall pray, }
 Ev'n utmost *Thule* shall thy pow'r obey;
 And *Neptune* shall resign the fasces of the sea;
 The wat'ry Virgins for thy bed shall strive,
 And *Tethys* all her waves in dow'ry give:
 Or wilt thou bless our Summers with thy rays,
 And, seated near the ballance, poise the days;
 Where, in the void of Heav'n, a space is free
 Betwixt the Scorpion and the Maid for thee;
 The Scorpion, ready to receive thy laws,
 Yields half his region, and contracts his claws;
 Whatever part of Heav'n thou shalt obtain,
 For let not hell presume of such a reign;
 Nor let so dire a thirst of Empire move
 Thy mind, to leave thy kindred Gods above.
 Tho' *Greece* admires *Elysium's* best retreat,
 Tho' *Proserpine* affects her silent seat,
 And importun'd by *Ceres* to remove,
 Prefers the fields below, to those above.
 But thou, propitious *Cesar*, guide my course,
 And to my bold endeavours add thy force.
 Pity the Poet's and the Plowman's cares;
 Int'rest thy greatness in our mean affairs,
 And use thy self betimes to hear and grant our Prayers. }

DRYDEN.

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IN the *Æneid*, the Exordium is without any Ornament, and the Invocation of *Calliope* the same, and only in general terms enquiring the causes of *Æneas's* misfortunes.

*Arma virumque cano, Troja qui primus ab oris
Italiam fato profugus, Lavinaque venit
Littora: multum ille & terris jactatus, & alto,
Vi superum, seva memorem Junonis ob iram:
Multa quoque & bello passus, dum conderet urbem,
Inferretque Deos Latio: genus unde Latinum,
Albanique patres, atque alta moenia Roma.*

*Musa mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso,
Quidve dolens regina Deum, tot volvere casus
Insignem pietate virum, tot adire labores
Impulerit: Tantane animis coelestibus ira?*

Arms and the Man I sing, who forc'd by fate,
And haughty *Juno's* unrelenting hate;
Expell'd and exil'd, left the *Trojan* shore,
Long labours both by sea and land he bore;
And in the doubtful war before he won
The *Latian* realm, and built the destin'd town:
The banish'd Gods restor'd to rites divine,
And settled sure succession in his line.
From whence the race of *Alban* fathers come,
And the long glories of majestic *Rome*.
O Muse! the causes and the crimes relate
What Goddess was provok'd, and whence her hate:
For what offence the Queen of Heav'n began
To persecute so brave, so just a Man!
Involv'd his anxious life in endless cares,
Expos'd to wants, and hurried into wars!
Can heav'nly minds such high resentments show;
Or exercise their spight in human woe. DRYDEN.

THE difference between these two Exordiums and Invocations, results from the consummate judgment of the Poet; for as it is necessary in a low subject, such as that of the *Georgicks*, to excite the Reader's attention as much as possible at first, that he may not be disgusted at the plain

phin rules he is to meet with in the sequel of the Poem. The Poet has according'y with the greatest solemnity invoked the several Deities of *Ceres*, *Bacchus*, *Neptune*, *Pan*, &c. besides that of *Augustus*, to favour his design, which was only to treat of tilling, planting, and breeding of cattle. But in the *Æneid*, the subject being of dignity enough to support itself, he only calls upon his Muse to tell why *Juno* persecuted *Æneas*. And here I cannot help observing, that *Horace*, who admires *Homer* for the simplicity of his Exordium, perhaps would have been better pleased with his Friend's, had he lived to see it made publick, which perhaps did not happen during his lifetime; at least he has not written any critical pieces since that time: even his *Art of Poetry* seeming to be a Work which he left imperfect at his death, and rather the materials of a nobler undertaking. The admirable *French* Critick and Poet seems of this mind, when in his *Art of Poetry*, treating of this subject, he breaks out into admiration of the *Latin* Poet in the following elegant manner.

O ! que j' aime bien mieux cet auteur plein d' adresse
 Qui sans faire d' abord de si haute promesse
 Me dit d'un ton aisé, doux, simple, harmonieux,
 Je chante les combats, & cet homme pieux
 Qui des bords Phrygiens conduit dans L' Ausonie
 Le premier aborda les champs de Lavinie
 Sa muse en arrivant ne met pas tout en feu
 Et pour donner beaucoup ne nous promet que peu.
 Bien tost vous la verrez prodiguant les miracles
 Du destin des Latins prononcer les oracles
 De Styx, & d'Acheron peindre les noirs torrens,
 En déjà les Césars dans l'Elysée errans.

Boileau's Art of Poetry,

Much better are we pleas'd with his address,
 Who without making such vast promises,
 Says in an easier style and plainer sense,
 " I sing the Combats of that pious Prince,
 " Who from the Phrygian Coast his armies bore,
 " And landed first on the Lavinian Shore."

His

His op'ning Muse sets not the world on fire,
And yet performs more than we can require;
Quickly you'll hear him celebrate the fame
And future glory of the *Roman* Name,
Of *Stryx* and *Acheron* describe the floods,
And wand'ring *Cæsars* in Elysian Woods,

No doubt but the Reader applauds the Poet's Art in adding *Augustus* to the Deities he invokes; but I must own, I think these beauties lose some of their merit from that extravagant adulation they have begun, and by their example encouraged the bestowing of, and even much grosser flatteries, by more indiscreet Writers, upon those far less deserving Princes, the successors of *Augustus*. Much I know may be said in the Poet's excuse, from the obligations he had to that Prince, from his profession, which very much delights in hyperbole, and the servile flatteries of the senate, which seemed to authorize such practices in private persons; since so illustrious a body as that was thought to be, descended so low as to decree him divine honours. But I take his profession to be the best plea; for *Suetonius* says, *Augustus* pretended not to be in the least desirous of these honours and addresses, and absolutely refused the title of Lord, which the Senate would have forced him to assume. However, he was not displeased with such a compliment, looking upon them with pleasure at least, as the flights and figures of a picture he esteemed, though perhaps not as the language of a subject to his Prince; which title itself he scarce would accept at first. But what shall we say to excuse some of the moderns, who, to the shame of their religion, have run almost even as great if not greater lengths in their Prince's Praise; and as Mr. *Prior* says of one of the best Writers of the age,

And *Boileau* for eight hundred pieces
Makes *Lewis* take the wall of *Jove*.

THE several fine passages to be observed within this incomparable Poem, are so obvious and glaring, one need not stand to point them out for the Reader's notice. In short,

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short, the whole Work is like a regular and magnificent building, so advantageously situated, as to appear equally beautiful from what side soever you take a view of it.

THERE is but one thing more I would take notice of concerning the *Georgicks*, which is the Episode of *Aristeus*, in the fourth Book, of which I have said something already. What I would farther observe, is, that it seems to flow more naturally from the subject, than the two fine conclusions of the first and second Books, which have never been called in question by the Criticks. And it seems to be owing to the ignorant credulity of some Grammarians, and the ill nature of bad Criticks, that the false notion of its having been afterwards inserted in the place of a Panegyrick of *Gallus*, has so much prevailed. I dare say, that an unprejudiced Reader, or one who had not heard of this opinion before, would never imagine this Episode, when he read it, to be otherwise than a fine conclusion of the whole Poem, immediately drawn from, and finely illustrating the subject of the last Book.

BUT as a farther proof of its being highly improbable that this Episode was afterwards inserted by *Augustus's* order; I shall transcribe the fine Compliment the Poet has paid *Gallus* in his sixth Eclogue, where no less than a God is introduced as making it. Now had *Augustus* conceived so strong an aversion for him, as they would make us believe who tell us this fine story, it is more than likely that *VIRGIL* would have been commanded to leave that out too. The Reader may judge of the matter when he reads the passage.

*Tum canit errantem Permessi ad flumina Gallum,
Aonas in montes ut duxerit una sororum,
Uique viro Phœbi chorus assurrexerit omnis:
Ut Linus hac illi divino carmine pastor,
Floribus atque apio crines ornatus amaro,
Dixerit: hos tibi dæd calamos, en accipe, Musa
Æscrao quos ante seni; quibus ille solebat
Cantando rigidos deducere montibus ornos.
His tibi Grynai nemoris dicatur origo;
Ne quis sit lucus, quo se plus jactet Apollo.*

Then

Then sang, how *Gallus* by a Muse's hand
 Was led, and welcom'd to the sacred stand;
 The Senate rising to salute their guest,
 And *Linus* thus their gratitude express'd:
 Receive this present, by the Muses made,
 The pipe on which th' *Ascrean* Pastor play'd;
 With which of old he charm'd the savage train,
 And call'd the mountain ashes to the plain.
 Sing thou on this, thy *Phœbus*, and the Wood
 Where once his fane of *Parian* Marble stood:
 On this his antient Oracles rehearse,
 And with new numbers grace the God of Verse.

DRYDEN.

WE are now come to our Poet's last and greatest Work, his *Æneid*. An Epick Poem is the noblest composition in Poetry, to which none but the Muses chief favourite must pretend, as it requires their best assistance and inspiration; being the compleatest Work to which human wit and invention can arrive. Let us but imagine the difficulty of finding assembled together, and united in one person, an exact judgement, an unbounded invention, a warm and lively imagination tempered with the most cool sedateness; a soul almost transported beyond itself, yet restrained by a just discretion, a most extensive genius, and universal knowledge: He that considers these extraordinary and almost contrary qualifications, requisite to form an Epick Poet, will be so far from wondering there have been no more of this Order, during the space of near six thousand years, that he will rather admire there could ever appear any of this prodigious character in the world: and will think it enough that old *Greece* can shew her *Homer*, *Rome* glory in her *VIRGIL*, and that the moderns dare mention a *Tasso* in *Italy* and a *Milton* in *England*; and perhaps *France* puts in her claim in the admirable Mr. *Voltaire*: For indeed it is enough to discourage a wise man from so desperate an attempt: notwithstanding which, how many have the two last ages produced, who without the least of these talents have been confident enough to undertake this Work!

IN

It seems pretty hard to determine whether the Latin or Greek Poets have most failed in the laying or execution of their Design, which comes first to be considered; since the rules by which we are to judge of it, have been drawn from their Writings. And though it cannot be said VIRGIL has deviated very much from *Homer's* Model, it would be nevertheless detracting from VIRGIL's excellent judgement, to imagine he would imitate even *Homer* where he thought him faulty. It appears upon enquiry that he has differed from *Homer* in several points, which we are to suppose he had just reason for doing; a man of his exactness not being likely to deviate from his Original, without deliberating upon it first. And if it be allowed of this Art, which experience convinces us to be true of all others, namely, that its first discoveries are capable of some improvements, and at the same time reflect on the advantages the Latin Poet had over the Greek, by living so long after him, when every Science was so much improved; it will be no disgrace to the latter, if he made use of these advantages, the want of all which the other was forced to supply from the vast stock of his own genius; since it would have been very much to the discredit of the Latin Poet, had he not laid hold of those opportunities that were offered him of writing at least in a more correct manner, and making his Design more noble and complete.

THIS we shall discover, if we examine and briefly compare it with that of the *Iliad*. The Fable is there contrived to give a fine instruction to the several petty Republicks of *Greece*, that the consequences of anger and discord are dangerous and fatal, as is shewn there to follow from the retirement of *Achilles* and his troops from the common cause and camp of *Greece*, upon a slight quarrel with the General; and the good effects of their reunion, in the death of *Hector*, the bulwark of *Troy*. What here seems faulty, is, that this point is not carried far enough; for the Poem ought not to end with *Hector's* death, but go on to the destruction of the City; which is no where declared in the Poem necessarily to follow upon *Hector's* death. VIRGIL's design is to deduce the descent of *Augustus* and the *Romans* from *Aeneas* and his

Com-

Companions; and by forming a perfect character in his Heroe, to pay a fine compliment to the many virtues and great qualities of that excellent Prince. His Fable shews, in the person of *Aeneas*, how a virtuous person at last is crowned with success, after all the difficulties he met with in his way; and this we see fully accomplished in the execution of the Poem. For the death of *Turnus* and *Amata* leaves him peaceable master of *Latium* and *Lavinia*. He has only shewn as much as was necessary of the Design of the Poem in his Exordium.

*Arma virumque cano, Troja qui primus ab oris
Italiam, fato profugus, Laviniaque venit
Littora: multum ille & terris jactatus & alto,
Mula quoque & bello passus, dum conderet urbem,
Inferretque deos Latio: genus unde Latinum,
Albanique patres, atque alta moenia Roma.*

Arms and the man I sing, who forc'd by fate,
And haughty *Juno's* unrelenting hate;
Expell'd and exil'd, left the *Trojan* shore,
Long labours both by sea and land he bore,
And in the doubtful war, before he won
The *Latian* Realm, and built the destin'd Town;
His banish'd Gods retir'd to Rites divine,
And settled sure succession in his line,
From whence the race of *Alban* Fathers come,
And the long glories of majestick *Rome*.

HERE all but the character of *Augustus*, concealed under that of *Aeneas*, is acknowledged. And I need not observe to any one, that to have told this too would have spoiled the compliment, and deprived us of one of the greatest pleasures we have in reading the Poem; which is to observe how artfully the Author has shadowed all the qualities of his Prince under the character of his Heroe.

He has been blamed for contracting his Poem and crowding his Fable together, and not affording the Reader that variety of incidents which depend upon the several inferior characters that appear to so much advantage in the *Iliad*. We shall have occasion to consider this matter hereafter.

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after more particularly, with regard to the under characters: Here it may suffice to answer, he might justly think it would destroy the unity of his design to divert the Reader's attention too much or too often from the principal character in the Poem; and that it was more agreeable to the exact order of his Plan, to make the whole action of the Poem depend upon him; so that nothing of importance should be carried on without, if not by him. In this point he might conceive *Homer* to have failed, who suffers *Achilles* to be so long out of action: For if any should answer for him, that this was unavoidable from the very design of the Poem, then the design is imperfect if compared with that of the *Æneid*; however it may otherwise compleatly answer *Homer's* intention.

THERE are some Criticks, that to charge him with want of invention, tell us how much he is beholden to that Greek Poet, and how many things he has borrowed from him: So did *Raphael* from *Michael Angelo* in Painting, and yet was never reckoned his inferior, or a less Genius for doing so. Indeed they have thereby paid the highest compliment to *VIRGIL's* understanding; especially if we can make it appear, that whatever he borrowed, it was to improve and not copy after: Such are the descent of *Ulysses* in the *Odyssee*, the celebration of the Games at the funeral of *Patroclus* in the *Iliad*. These how far the Latin has improved upon the Greek Poet, in the descent of *Æneas* with the Sibyl, and the Games in honour of his Father *Anchises*, will be shewn in their proper place during the course of these Observations; not to mention, much less insist on lesser points, as the superior beauty of all those comparisons that may seem derived from *Homer*. This *Mr. Pope* has frequently acknowledged in his Notes. But the artful conduct of the Design in the *Æneid*, is every where remarkable, even where it has been thought most liable to exception; as in the *Episode* of *Dido* and *Æneas*. The Anachronism there, is a beauteous and judicious fault, if there are any absurdly rigid enough to call it one, and is perhaps one of the strongest instances that can be given of the Poet's address in courting the affection and favour of his Countrymen. And here I beg leave to observe, that if the Reader attentively considers the beauty of the
several

several passages in the *Georgicks* as well as the *Æneid*, capable of affecting the generous spirits of the *Romans*; how truly the Poet has comply'd with the peculiar bent and turn of their genius, and favoured and commended their darling love of empire, and jealousy of any rival; he will not be surprized at it, much less question the truth of what is related, that when VIRGIL came to take his place in the theatre at *Rome*, the whole company rose up to do him honour, as much as if *Augustus* himself had entered.

Carthage, *Rome's* great rival, is represented as the peculiar care of the Queen of Heaven, whose whole thoughts are divided between meditating the ruin of the *Trojans*, and the raising of her favourite City, as it is called.

*Quam Juno fertur terris magis omnibus unam
Posthabita coluisse Samo.* ——— *Æneid. Lib. 1.*

————— Belov'd by *Juno* more
Than her own *Argos*, or the *Samian* shore.

But finding she cannot work the destruction of the *Trojans* by force, she has recourse to stratagem; and pretending a concern for their welfare and establishment, would have them unite and become one people with the *Carthaginians*, as she tells *Venus*:

*Communem hunc ergo populum, paribusque regamus
Auspicijs* ——— *Ibid.*

Your *Trojan* with my *Tyrian* let us join,
So *Dido* shall be your's, *Æneas* mine;
One common Kingdom, one united Line.
Eliza shall a *Dardan* Lord obey,
And losty *Carthage* for a dow'r convey.

}

But the Queen of Love sees all her malice through the thin disguise of friendship:

————— *Sensit enim simulata mente locutam,
Quo regnum Italia Libycas averteret oras.*

— *Venus*

—— *Venus* her hidden fraud descry'd,
Which would the scepter of the world misguide
To *Libyan* shores. ———

Now a *Roman* could not but be extremely delighted to find, after the consummation of the marriage between *Dido* and *Aeneas*, the Poet's Art disappoint the Plot of *Juno*, by interposing the absolute will and decree of *Jupiter* for the Heroe's departure, denounced to him in the most solemn manner by *Mercury*. This at once rescues *Aeneas* from the obligations of his love, and makes him forsake, if not with so good a grace, at least with a just excuse, the enamoured and unhappy *Dido*.

A fine composition and mixture of the Marvellous and the Probable, in the execution of the Fable, is one of the principal ornaments to an Epick Poem: And that he has excellently well tempered these two together in the *Aeneid*, is so evident, that the Reader need go no farther than to examine the first Book, and he must perceive it. *Boileau* at first found it so extraordinary, he could not forbear mentioning it in his *Art of Poetry* as follows:

*Qu' Eneé & ses Vaisseaux par le vent écartez
Soient aux bords Africains d'un orage emportez,
Ce n'est qu'une aventure ordinaire & commune,
Qu'un coup peu surprenant des traits de la fortune.
Mais que Junon constante en son aversion
Pursuive sur les flots les restes D' Ilion;
Qu' Eole en sa faveur les chassant d' Italie,
Ouvre aux vents mutinez les prisons d' Eolie;
Que Neptune en courreaux s' eleuant sur la mer
D'un mot calme les flots, mette la paix dans l' air,
Delivre les vaisseaux, des Syrtes les arrache:
C'est la ce qui surprend, frappe, saisit, attache,*

'Tis no great wonder if a tempest bore
The Trojan Fleet against the *Libyan* Shore;
From faithless Fortune this is no surprise,
For ev'ry day 'tis common to our eyes;

But

But that avengeful *Juno* should destroy,
 And overwhelm the rest of ruin'd *Troy*:
 That *Æolus* with the fierce Goddess join'd,
 Should open the dark prisons of the Wind;
 That angry *Neptune*, looking o'er the main,
 Rebukes the tempest, calms the waves again;
 Their vessels from the dang'rous quicksands steers:
 These are the springs that move our hopes and fears.

THE same artful invention of adorning common incidents, appears throughout the Poem; though it is observable, that VIRGIL raised his subject by his machinery, only where the circumstances require it. And if we examine his behaviour on these occasions, and compare it with *Homer's*, the advantage will soon discover itself on the side of the former; for the latter has long since been condemned for treating his Gods so ill, which his greatest admirers, by turning it into allegory, have not been able to excuse. Thus *Telemachus* cannot take a step, but *Minerva*, disguised like *Mentor*, must attend and direct him, nor his *Æneas* stir abroad without some Deity or other at his elbow: whereas VIRGIL's Heroe wants no such help on every common occasion, but finds it at such times when his circumstances are so desperate, he could not be supposed able to extricate himself but by some extraordinary means; as in the first Book, after he had suffered so many hardships in his voyage to *Italy*, whither the Oracle had commanded him to go, and is at length cast on a strange shore, his Fleet dispersed, his Men disheartened, and his Provisions spent. He is then assisted by *Venus* his Mother; and what is more probable, than that his Mother should be concerned for him, and after enquiring concerning his fortune of *Jupiter*, come to strengthen him under his misfortunes, and tell him where he was. Here it is worth while to observe the Poet's contrivance, though *Jupiter* again assures *Venus*, that her son shall be the founder of a great and mighty Empire, as he had promised her before, and the Reader is let into the secret; the Heroe is still kept ignorant of what is reserved for him, any farther than what the Oracle had hinted of his settling in *Italy*.

—Sedes

— *Sedes ubi fata quietas*
Ostendant, illic fas regna resurgere Troje.

Æneid. Lib. 3.

On *Latium's* happy shores you shall be cast :
 Where gentle *Tiber* from his bed beholds
 The flow'ry meadows, and the feeding folds :
 There end your toils, and there your Fates provide
 A quiet Kingdom, and a royal Bride :
 There Fortune shall the *Trojan* Line restore.

DRYDEN.

THE rest is reserved for a more solemn and marvellous discovery in *Elysium*, where by a fine anticipation of things the Heroe is prepared for all the approaching dangers of a cruel war, and is there shewn by his Father's Ghost, the shades or images of his posterity ; that is, the souls that were to inform and animate the bodies of his successors : This is agreeable to *Pythagoras* and *Plato*, whose opinions he embraced, and forsook the *Epicurean* principles he had imbibed in his youth. Here our Author has given the boldest strokes of the Marvellous, and if any where, it is in this Book he ought to be charged with the want of the Probable ; but indeed the occasion was so tempting, and it was so fine a scene to introduce *Anchises* giving his son a propheticall history of all that was to happen for ages to come, that to secure the one he hazarded the other, and seemed a little to neglect Probability for the sake of the Marvellous. They that blame VIRGIL for this most beautiful and sublime part of the *Æneid*, should take these lines of the *Essay on Criticism* along with them, to help them to form a true judgment of these sublime passages in the great Poets.

Great Wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
 From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
 And snatch a grace beyond the rules of art ;
 Which, without passing through the judgment, gains
 The heart, and all at once its end attains.

POPE.

I shall

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I shall proceed to give an instance or two more of our Poet's conduct, in managing his Machines, as *Mercury's* coming in the fourth Book, peremptorily to bid *Aeneas*, in obedience to the will of *Jupiter*, fly from Love and *Dido*; else that Prince could have had no tolerable excuse for leaving such a tender and generous Princess; and must have incurred the guilt of ingratitude, a crime so very contrary to the great goodness and humanity which constitute his character; or by staying with her, disappointed the design of Fate. The other instance is the appearance of *Venus* to her Son, to save *Helen's* life, which he was preparing to deprive her of, and to convince the Heroe of the impossibility of saving his Country from ruin; by opening his eyes, and letting him see the Gods themselves actually promoting the subversion of *Troy*. This at once exalts his piety and valour, the latter of which was now not only grown useless but impious; VIRGIL having too nice a discernment to make his Heroe fight with, and wound the Gods, as *Homer's Diomedes* does.

THOUGH the fine disposition of the Fable, and the just mixture of the Marvellous and Probable in the *Aeneid*, are the necessary result of the Poet's Art; yet I think it cannot sufficiently justify the observation of an excellent modern Critick and Poet, that in the *Iliad* we most admire the Poem, in the *Aeneid* the Poet: For in the latter, the action being entirely carried on by, or depending upon one, it fixes our attention more closely upon that Heroe, whose Design is so pious and noble, and his character so truly virtuous, that though VIRGIL's stile is more narrative than *Homer's*, the manner is so interesting and pathetick, and the several instances so very extraordinary with respect to his misfortunes and troubles on one hand, and his deliverances and success on the other, that we lose sight of the Poet all along, and become a party concerned ourselves: But a *Roman*, of whom the Poem was written, must have been much more so, from the very constitution of it, as has been shewed already: whereas *Homer*, notwithstanding *Achilles* is his principal Heroe, divides your admiration among so many others, that you cannot be so strongly moved in behalf of any one as you

should be: Besides, it cannot be denyed, that *Hector* is the brightest and best character in the *Iliad*, for which reason, if there were any, he ought to be reckoned the Heroe of the Poem.

It has been looked upon as a standing rule in Painting, that Sister Art to Poetry, that the principal figure should be set off with all the advantages of strong lights and shades, and all other embellishments that may contribute to make it most remarkable to the spectator's eye. The several other figures of the Group are to fall short of this perfection, in proportion to the part they are to bear in the Design. This rule should seem equally applicable to Epick Poetry, where there is, or ought to be, some principal character, on whose adventures the whole design must chiefly depend; and which consequently if not intended compleat in every part, should at least so eminently surpass the rest, as to be in no danger of a comparison with any of them.

THIS fault *Homer* seems to have fallen into, when perhaps with a view to gratify the several Commonwealths of *Greece*, he makes the characters of many of his Heroes, not only more virtuous, but even for valour, which is the peculiar virtue of Heroes, contend with *Achilles*; whom he sometimes loses sight of for a long time together, to make way for the rest to appear with more advantage. And then he raises them so high, that they would appear upon a level with the Son of *Thetis*, if he were there to admit of the comparison: Witness in particular the character of *Diomed*, who, assisted by *Minerva*, wounds and drives the God of War himself howling out of the field of battle; and sends him up to heaven complaining to *Jupiter* of the affront, which is made the subject of sport and laughter to the other Gods; and when *Venus* interposes to save *Aeneas* from the same Heroe's sword, she too feels its violence, and her fair hand stained with blood increases the heaven's disgrace and his triumph: Nay, it is not without the most terrible menaces to him, that *Apollo* himself escapes his fury. However, we will grant in favour of *Diomed*, that he had at least a supernatural assistance, which partly enabled him to perform such great actions. But what shall we say of *Ajax*, who, unassisted

but

but by his own courage and bravery, engages *Hector* on unequal terms, who was already assured by the divine Oracles, that he should not fall in that engagement; and notwithstanding this, the advantage ends visibly on *Ajax's* side. Nay, the *Trojan* Prince had fallen beneath the other's force, had not *Apollo* strengthened his sinking body and benumbed nerves, which were almost crushed by the prodigious stone that *Ajax* hurled at him; and 'tis the *Trojan* that first proposes to put an end to their duel, which he consents to, because he thereby looked upon himself as conqueror, and accordingly returned in triumph to the Camp of the *Greeks*. And what more brave than this can *Achilles* do? why! he kills *Hector*, not only unsupported by any Deity, but terrified and disheartened by the Gods, whom *Ajax* had well nigh slain when they helped and protected him.

VIRGIL'S Heroes are drawn in a just subordination to the great character of *Aeneas*, to which that of *Turnus* is finely contrasted, as *Mezentius's* to *Evander*. The others of *Lausus*, *Pallas*, *Drances*, *Euryalus*, *Nysus*, &c. are all drawn suitable to the part they bear in the principal design. This judicious disposition sets the Poem open to the view at once, without distracting the mind too much to consider the different parts. 'Tis like a fine regular garden, where all the principal walks and avenues present themselves to the eye in the center, where they meet, at once enlarging the prospect, and giving the whole an air of order and uniformity.

BUT this subordination is said to have left the Poem without life and spirit, if compared to the *Iliad*, whose action is every where kept up with the greatest warmth and vigour. I know this might be retorted upon the *Odyssey*, where *Homer* is thought sometimes to dream a little, though they are allowed to be golden dreams. But as this would be no justification of VIRGIL, let us examine the Action of the *Aeneid*, and see what grounds there are for this accusation.

THE Action, though so entirely depending on *Aeneas*, never cools; the Poet's Art still furnishing him with new occasions of keeping it up. Among other instances, I chuse to make use of *Aeneas's* Narration to *Dido*; where

the figures seem to be drawn in miniature, and consequently require the nicest strokes of the Pencil to give them that life, which is visible in the larger figures, I mean in the Poet's own Narration. If therefore in this part, the Poet, though streightned for room, has so well group'd his figures, as to shew them as distinctly, and to as much advantage as they could be, if they were placed nearer to view, I think it will give little opportunity to condemn him. By the bye, I shall here observe, that the Poet has taken such great care to obviate this objection, that the first six Books, which ought to be more faint and languishing than the six last, as being copied after the *Odyssey*, an Original of much less boldness and spirit, have nevertheless been allowed by the severest judges, to be by no means inferior to the six last in this respect : And indeed, if we miss our Author's last hand at all, it is in the latter part of the *Æneid*.

I shall now proceed to present the Reader with a short sketch of part of the Narration in the second Book, and quote but a few of the many moving and sublime Passages in it. How is the artful *Sinon* introduced with a Speech full of the deepest fraud and dissimulation, concealed under the most insinuating address and plausible sincerity. He deceitfully assures the too credulous old King and his Court, to gain credit to the sequel of his discourse, that

————— *Nec, si miserum fortuna Sinonem
Finxit, vanum etiam mendacemque improba finget.*

Tho' plung'd by Fortune's pow'r in misery,
'Twas not in Fortune's pow'r to make him lye.

DRYDEN.

Then going on with his well invented Tale, he at length persuades the unhappy *Trojans* to bring in the fatal horse.

*Talibus insidiis, perjurique arte Simonis
Credita res : captique dolis, lachrimisque coacti :
Quos neque Tydides, nec Larissæus Achilles,
Non anni domuere decem, non mille carina.*

With

With such deceits he gain'd their easy Hearts,
Too prone to credit his perfidious Arts.
What *Diomed*, nor *Thetis* greater son,
A thousand ships, nor ten years siege had done,
False tears, and fawning words the city won.

DRYDEN.

The extraordinary death of *Laocoon* and his sons at the Altar, confirms the peoples veneration for the wooden horse; for having violated which with his spear, he seemed to die as a just punishment from the offended Goddess.

— *Tremefacta novus per pectora cunctis
Insinuat pavor; & scelus expendisse merentem
Laocoonta ferunt.*

Ibid.

Amazement seizes all; the general cry
Proclaims *Laocoon* justly doom'd to die;
Whose hand the will of *Pallas* had withstood,
And dar'd to violate the sacred wood.

DRYDEN.

With what ominous pomp and solemnity is the horse brought into the city.

*Ille subit, mediaque minans illabitur urbi:
O Patria, O Divum domus Ilium, & inclyta bello
Mœnia Dardanidum! quater ipso in limine porta
Substitit, atque utero sonitum quater arma dedere.
Instamus tamen immemores* —

Ibid.

It enters o'er our heads, and threatens the town:
O sacred city, built by hands divine!
O valiant heroes of the *Trojan* line!
Four times he struck; as oft the clashing sound
Of arms was heard, and inward groins rebound:
Yet mad with zeal, and blinded with our fate,
We hawl along the horse in solemn state.

DRYDEN.

Who but *VIRGIL* could paint as he has done, the horrors of that fatal night. I shall chuse to confine my self

to such instances, as, regarding the person of *Æneas*, will likewise serve to illustrate his character. Just at the entrance of the bloody scene, *Hector's* ghost is introduced, appearing to him in the following manner :

*Tempus erat, quo prima quies mortalibus agris
Incipit, & dono divum gratissima serpit :
In somnis ecce ante oculos mœstissimus Hector
Visus adesse mihi, largosque effundere fletus :
Raptatus bigis, ut quondam, aterque cruento
Pulvere, perque pedes trajectus lora tumentes.
Hei mihi, qualis erat ! quantum mutatus ab illo
Hectore, qui redit exuvias indutus Achillis,
Vel Danaum Phrygios jaculatus puppibus ignes !
Squalentem barbam, & concretos sanguine crines,
Vulneraque illa gerens, qua circum plurima muros
Accepit patrios —*

Ibid.

'Twas in the dead of night, when sleep repairs
Our bodies worn with toils, our minds with cares,
When *Hector's* ghost before my sight appears,
A bloody shroud he seem'd, and bath'd with tears.
Such as he was, when, by *Pelides* slain,
Theſſalian coursers dragg'd him o'er the plain ;
Swol'n were his feet, as when the thongs were thrust
Through the bor'd holes, his body black with dust :
Unlike that *Hector*, who return'd from toils
Of war, triumphant in *Æacian* spoils :
Or him, who made the fainting *Greeks* retire,
And launch'd against their navy *Phrygian* fire :
His hair and beard stood stiffen'd with his gore,
And all the wounds he for his country bore
Now stream'd afresh, and with new purple ran.

DRYDEN.

So solemn an appearance was enough to surprize the most resolute mind ; but what he tells *Æneas*, as it was on the one hand full of horror, it was on the other a sufficient reason not to engage the enemy.

Hic

*Hec fuge, nate Dea, teque his ait eripe flammis !
 Hostis habet muros ; ruit alto à culmine Troja :
 Sat patria, Priamoque datum : si Pergama dextra
 Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.
 Sacra, suosque tibi commendat Troja Penates ;
 Hos cape fatorum comites : his mœnia quare
 Magna, pererratro statues qua denique ponto.* Ibid.

O Goddess-born ! escape, by timely flight,
 The flames and horrors of this fatal night.
 The foes already have possess'd the wall,
 Troy nods from high, and totters to her fall.
 Enough is paid to Priam's royal name ;
 More than enough to duty and to fame.
 If by a mortal hand my father's throne
 Cou'd be defended, 'twas by mine alone.
 Now Troy to thee commends her future state,
 And gives her Gods companions of thy fate :
 From their assistance happier walls expect,
 Which wand'ring long at last thou shalt erect.
 He said, and brought me from their blest abodes
 The venerable statues of the Gods,
 With ancient *Vesta*, from the sacred Quire
 The wreaths and relicks of th' immortal fire. DRYDEN.

Was not here reason enough for a Man of the greatest courage, to decline any farther striving with fate, and if he had any piety, or love for his country, to execute his commission faithfully ? But if this was not warning enough to retire, the sight of *Pantheus*, *Apollo's* priest, retiring with the conquered Gods to *Æneas*, and the dismal account he brings him, was enough to sink his high spirit, and make him think of saving the poor remains of his country by flight. But instead of this, he makes on to fight with this noble resolution ;

— *Moriamur, & in media arma ruamus.*
Una salus victis, nullam sperare salutem.

Ibid,

Then let us fall, but fall amidst our foes,
Despair of life the means of living shews. DRYDEN.

How terrible is the description of *Pyrrhus*, *Achilles's* son? And I cannot but think the Poet, by comparing him to the Serpent that has just cast his skin, thereby intended to give the Reader a just Idea of the great resemblance between him and his father.

*Vestibulum ante ipsum, primoque in limine Pyrrhus
Exultat, telis & luce coruscus athena.
Qualis ubi in lucem coluber, mala gramina pastus,
Frigida sub terra tumidum quem bruma tegebat,
Nunc positus novus exuviis, nitidusque juvena,
Lubrica convolvit sublato pectore terga
Arduus ad solem, & linguis micat ore trifurcis.* Ibid.

Before the gate stood *Pyrrhus* threatening loud,
With glittering arms conspicuous in the croud.
So shines, renew'd in youth, the crested snake,
Who slept the winter in a thorny brake:
And casting off his slough, when spring returns,
Now looks aloft, and with new glory burns:
High o'er the grass, hissing, he rolls along,
And brandishes by fits his forky tongue. DRYDEN.

THE Scene of *Priam's* death in the Temple is very tragical, and particularly the circumstance of his Son's expiring at his feet; at which the unhappy old King, forgetting his age, attacks *Pyrrhus*, who thereupon kills him. The description of his headless body, is exactly that of *Pompey's*.

— *Jacet ingens litore truncus,
Avulsumque humeris caput, & sine nomine corpus.* Ib.

On the black shore now lies th' abandon'd King,
A headless carcass, and a nameless thing.

AND now *Aeneas* had lost all his companions in the slaughter, and yet could not resolve to retire; but spying
Helen

Helen going to take refuge in one of the temples, he was preparing by her death, to cut off the cause at least of his country's ruin, when Venus appears to him, and shews him all the Gods actually hastening its destruction.

Non tibi Tyndaridis facies inuisa Lacana,
Culpatufve Paris; verum inclementia Divum
Has evertit opes, sternitque à culmine Trojam.
Aspice: (namque omnem qua nunc obducta tuenti
Mortales hebetat visus tibi, & humida circum
Caligat, nubem eripiam: tu nequa parentis
Jussa time, neu praeceptis parere recusa.)
Hic ubi dejectas moles, avulsaque saxis
Saxa vides, mixtoque undantem pulvere sumum,
Neptunus muros, magnoque emota Tridenti
Fundamenta quatit, totamque à sedibus urbem
Erui: hic Juno Scaas fidissima portas
Prima tenet, sociumque furens à navibus agmen
Ferro accincta vocat. —————
Jam summas arces Tritonia, respice, Pallas
Insedit, nimbo effulgens, & Gorgone sava.
Ipse pater Danaïs animos, vireque secundas
Sufficit: ipse Deos in Dardana suscitât arma.
Eripe, nate, fugam, finemque impone labori. Ibid.

Not Helen's face, nor Paris was in fault,
But by the Gods was this destruction brought:
Now cast your eyes around, while I dissolve
The mist and films that mortal eyes involve:
Purge from your sight the dross, and make you see
The shape of each avenging Deity.
Enlightned thus, my just commands fulfil,
Nor fear obedience to your mother's will.
Where yon disorder'd heap of ruin lies,
Stones rent from stones, where clouds of dust arise,
Amidst that smother, Neptune holds his place,
Below the walls foundation drives his mace,
And heaves the building from the solid base.
Look where in arms imperial Juno stands
Full in the Scæan gate, with loud commands;
Urging on shore the tardy Græcian bands.

See *Pallas* of her snaky buckler proud,
 Besides the tow'r refulgent thro' the cloud.
 See *Jove* new courage to the foe supplies,
 And arms against the town the partial Deities.
 Haste hence my son, this fruitless labour end.

DRYDEN.

'Twas now high time to retire and obey the repeated will of Heaven : yet, as if the Poet was afraid his piety might be misconstrued, he makes his Heroe interrupt his Narration, to make the following exclamation, to justify his behaviour on this occasion.

*Iliaci cineres, & flamma extrema meorum,
 Testor in occasu vestro nec tela, nec ulla
 Vitavisse vices Danaum ; & si fata suissent
 Ut caderem, meruisse manu.* —

Ibid.

Ye Trojan flames, your testimony bear,
 What I perform'd, and what I suffer'd there :
 No sword-avoiding in the fatal strife,
 Expos'd to death, and prodigal of life.
 Witness, ye Heavens, I live not by my fault,
 I strove to have deserv'd the death I fought. DRYDEN.

I NEED mention no more than these passages ; which, though not describing the heat of action, yet have a warmth in them, that's enough to make the Reader's heart glow while he reads them. And indeed 'tis VIRGIL's talent only to warm the Reader in the first page, and carry it on with the same Spirit to the end ; the very last line of the *Aeneid* having as much fire as any in the most enlivened parts of the whole Work. They indeed only complain of the languor of his Style, who not being able to relish the manly strokes of his energick brevity, are apt to think many an expression flat, because there the thought is contracted into a small compass, and placed only in one true point of light, which a careless Reader may miss, and so not discern the beauty of it. It were endless to give instances of this kind : it may therefore suffice to give the Reader

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Reader this notice, of which, if observed, he will soon reap the benefit.

HAVING from the Quotations above-mentioned, given some insight into *Æneas's* Character, I shall here go on to consider it a little more fully. We find in him the highest valour governed by the greatest prudence; the fondest husband and father, and the most pious son; the noblest enemy, the most faithful friend, a good and religious prince, sacrificing himself for the good of his posterity, and forsaking a Crown, a Queen, and Love, for an uncertain good; certain danger, and cruel misfortunes for their sake, and in obedience to the Gods: so that in his person we find united all the good qualities *Homer's* fancy could invent, or *VIRGIL's* judgment endow him with; for he is not so visibly protected as *Ulysses* by *Minerva*, and has besides the Queen of Heaven for his most implacable enemy. The powers of hell, earth, seas, and air, combine against him, and are by turns his deadly foes; but in the end serve to set his virtues in a brighter light, to multiply his victories, and grace his triumphs: In short, all that could please the refined taste of the most polite Court and age in the world, is summed up in his character.

THERE are some imagine he discovers too much fear and concern in the storm, when he cries out,

O terque quaterque beati
 Quis ante ora patrum, Troja sub mœnibus altis,
 Contigit oppetere ————— *Æneid Lib. I.*

And thrice, and four times, happy those, he cry'd,
 That under *Ilion's* walls before their parents died.

DRYDEN.

I BELIEVE it will appear, upon enquiry, that it is for want of entring into the highest perfection of his character, that he has been censured thus. The Heroë is concerned indeed, but not for his approaching death; his life he is ready to part with: but that he should die unprofitably, without being able to settle and establish the poor remains of his desolated country; that he must now

see those who followed him in obedience to the Oracle, and in hopes of the promised rest and establishment, now ready to be swallowed up by the merciless waves; rather than this should happen, he wishes he had bravely dy'd fighting in his country's defence. May he not in these deplorable circumstances be allowed to expostulate a little with Heaven, that seemed to have forgot or recalled its promises of success? May he not do this consistently with true bravery and magnanimity? But what is there in the character of *Achilles*, or *Ulysses*, or both together, that answers this of *Aeneas*? How slight is the occasion *Achilles* takes to quarrel with *Agamemnon*? How ungenerous his withdrawing himself and his troops from the rest of the *Greeks*? If they answer, as 'tis likely they should, that the Poet purposely drew him passionate, haughty, and inexorable; he must be allowed not to be so proper for the principal character in Epick Poetry, which, according to *Aristotle*, should be distinguished above the rest by uncommon virtues, not vices.

NOR is it enough to say, that such a character is agreeable to Historick truth; for this is the advantage of Poetry over History, that it brightens and adorns every character it undertakes, proposing them as examples of virtue to be aimed at, though we know they are not actually attainable by human frailty. And thus it is that Poetry instructs; not so much by the many useful examples it proposes for the conduct of life, which perhaps are not equal to what may be drawn from the most indifferent history; but by placing every virtue and good quality in so amiable and charming a light, that a well-disposed mind cannot discover these beauties, without being warmed into the strongest desire of imitating so fine an Original. And herein, methinks, consists VIRGIL's superiority to *Homer*, whose Poem, though full of an admirable variety of well drawn characters, yet because they all herein agree with history, in representing Men rather as they are, than as they should be, they for this reason, are not so truly instructive as those in VIRGIL; though most of his are, except *Aeneas's*, inferior to those of the *Iliad*.

WHEN we would make a crooked bough streight, we bend it as much the contrary way: and wise men of all
ages

ages have found it necessary to represent every duty of life something more strictly than the thing required; well knowing how apt we all are to make our selves allowances in the practice of them. History cannot therefore give such encouragement to the practice of Virtue, as the fictions of Poetry. One of the great arguments of a future retribution in another life, being deducible from the apparent unequal distributions of justice here on earth; Providence, for secret reasons known to the Divine Wisdom only, suffering wickedness too often to triumph, and Virtue to be oppressed: but Poetical justice never fails to reward Virtue, and punish vice.

BUT this Justice not being according to the practice of the world, it is necessary to insinuate it into the Reader's mind by all the embellishments this Art is capable of; and therefore the Poet conceals his real aim under the veil of pleasure: he first raises your admiration, and wins your heart by the harmony of his numbers, the brightness of his figures, and the beauty of his sentiments; and thereby allures the mind to relish all that perfection he is describing in his Heroe, and makes you secretly applaud every step he takes in the rugged paths of virtue.

THIS is the great improvement VIRGIL's philosophy made upon the barbarity of *Homer's* age; though even he himself seems to have mended his notions of this matter when he wrote the *Odyssee*. *Ulysses* is there the manifest Heroe of the Poem, and is recommendable for many great qualities; not but that there are some flaws in it, which VIRGIL would have struck out, had he had the managing of it. That craft that is the essence of his character, he would have changed into true wisdom; nor suffered him to stay so long in company with *Calypso* and *Circe*; nor mentioned his excessive drinking among the *Phaicians*; nor let him forget the King, to contend with the contemptible *Irus*. These are enough to make *Ulysses* forfeit part of his Title to that wisdom and prudence the Poet attributes to him, and render him unworthy of having *Minerva* always at his elbow. Let us trace the two Heroes a little further, and follow them in their descent into hell. What a very different figure do they there make? *Aeneas* meets not, like *Ulysses*, some troubled ghost, who,

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who, (such is the unhappy doom of Heroes even in Elysium,) had rather be the meanest wretch alive, than what he is; according to the letter of the Proverb, *That a live Dog is better than a dead Lion*. What a comfortable view is here of another life, and a future state! We shall see by and by how far VIRGIL has exceeded the Greek in this Article. What a fine Scene, full of a beautiful horror, does he present to view in the entrance of hell.

*Vestibulum ante ipsum, primisque in faucibus orci,
Luctus, & ultrices posuere cubilia Curae.
Pallentes habitant morbi, tristisque senectus,
Et metus, & malesuada fames, & turpis egestas;
Terribiles visu forma: letumque laborque,
Tum consanguineus leti sopor, & mala mentis
Gaudia, mortiferumque adverso in limine bellum,
Ferreique Eumenidum Thalami, & discordia demens
Vipereum crinem vittis innixa cruentis.* Æneid. L. VI.

Just in the gate, and in the jaws of Hell,
Revengeful cares and sudden sorrows dwell,
And pale diseases, and repining age,
Want, fear, and famine's unresisting rage:
Here toils, and death, and, death's half brother, sleep,
Forms terrible to view, their centry keep:
With anxious pleasures of a guilty mind,
Deep frauds before, and open force behind:
The Furies iron beds, and strife that shakes
Her hissing tresses, and unfolds her snakes. DRYDEN.

HERE is a real Hell indeed, painted in all its terrors. The Poet goes on to describe the infernal rivers, old *Charon*, &c. and then distributes into different companies the criminals of several kinds; and what *Achilles* tells *Ulysses* in hell when he sees him, VIRGIL puts in the mouth of the self-murderers, whose highest wish is described to be, to live again, and endure all those evils that had before made them so weary of life, as voluntarily to part with it.

— *Quam vellent, athere in ipso,
Nunc & pauperiem & duros perferre labores.*
Æneid. Lib. VI.

With late repentance now they wou'd retrieve
The bodies they forsook, and wish to live :
Their pains and poverty desire to bear,
To view the light of Heaven, and breathe the vital Air.

DRYDEN.

THIS was not the case of *Cato*, *Cæsar's* great antagonist ; whose death, how falsely I shall not here examine, was ranked among those of the *Curii* and *Decii*, those Heroes that devoted themselves for their country : and therefore we need not wonder why *VIRGIL* should afterwards describe him giving laws to the just in *Elyzium*, though he had laid violent hands on himself, perhaps rather than by falling into *Cæsar's* hands, to owe his life to the clemency of the man he hated.

ÆNEAS's meeting *Dido* here is very moving, and her silence finely imagined : but what can be more magnificent and sublime, than the description of the *Tartarian* gulph, where the wicked are tormented ?

——— *Tartarus ipse,*
Eis patet in præceps tantum, tenditque sub umbras
Quantus ad æthereum Cœli suspectus Olympum.
Æneid, Lib. VI.

The gaping gulph low to the center lies,
And twice as deep as earth is distant from the skies.

DRYDEN.

AFTER having given the strongest and most terrible Idea of the punishments inflicted upon the wicked, the Poet declares himself unable to enumerate them all.

Non mihi si lingua centum sint, oraque centum,
Ferrea vox ——— *Æneid Lib. VI.*

But the *Elyzian* fields are as delightful as hell was terrible.

— *Amæna*

———— *Amœna vireta*

Fortunatorum nemorum ———

Largior hic campos æther, & lumine vestit

Purpureo: solemque suum, sua sidera norunt. Æn. L. VI.

———— They took their way

Where long extended plains of pleasure lay:

The verdant fields with those of Heav'n may vie

With æther vested and a purple sky.

The blissful seats of happy souls below,

Stars of their own, and their own Suns they know.

DRYDEN.

AND the inhabitants are fit for so blest'd a place.

Hic manus ob patriam pugnando vulnera passi,

Quique sacerdotes casti dum vita manebat,

Quique pii vates & Phæbo digna locuti,

Omnibus his nivea cinguntur tempora vitta. Æn. L. VI.

Here Patriots live, who for their country's good

In fighting fields were prodigal of blood.

Priests of unblemish'd lives here make abode,

And Poets worthy their inspiring God;

The heads of these with holy fillets bound,

And all their temples were with garlands crown'd.

DRYDEN.

THEIR employment and diversions are suitable to the
innocence of their lives.

Pars in gramineis exercent membra palastris,

Pars pedibus plaudunt choreas, & carmina dicunt.

Æn. Lib. VI.

Their airy limbs in sports they exercise,

And on the green contend the wrestlers prize.

Some in Heroick Verse divinely sing,

Others in artful measures lead the ring.

DRYDEN.

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NOR does their life admit of any confinement; they wander at their liberty through those delightful plains.

*Nulli certa domus: lucis habitamus opacis,
Riparumque toros, & prata recentia rivis
Incolimus* ———

Æn. Lib. VI.

In no fix'd place the happy soul resides,
In groves we live, and lie on mossy beds
By crystal streams that murmur through the meads.

DRYDEN.

THE Reader that compares this Scene of *Elyzium* in the Latin, with that of the Greek Poet's, will readily grant the advantage to be on VIRGIL's side.

I HAVE already taken some notice of that Master-piece of VIRGIL's, in acquainting his Heroe, through *Anchises's* means, in *Elyzium*, with the many Heroes of his race; and by informing him what great things they are to do hereafter, giving him the highest encouragement to surmount all the obstacles that may hinder his laying the foundation of so great an Empire. I know this conduct of the Poet's has been much cavilled at, which he seems to have taken all possible care to prevent. *Anchises* prepares his son for it, by a large philosophical account, according to the *Platonick* and *Pythagorean* principles, which I shall present to the Reader's consideration, in order to justify our Author.

*Principio cœlum ac terras, camposque liquenter,
Lucentemque globum luna, Titanaque & astra
Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, & magno se corpore miscet:
Inde hominum, pecudumque genus, vitæque volantum,
Et quæ marmoreo fert monstra sub aquore pontus.
Igneus est ollis vigor & celestis origo
Seminibus, quantum non noxia corpora tardant,
Terrenique hebetant artus, moribundaque membra.
Hinc metuant cupiuntque, dolent gaudentque, neque auras
Respi-*

Respiciunt, clausa tenebris & carcere caco.

Quin & supremo cum lumine vita reliquit:

Non tamen omne malum miseris, nec funditus omnes

Corporea excedunt pestes; penitusque necesse est

Multa diu concreto modis inolescere miris.

Ergo exercentur pœnis, veterumque malorum

Supplicia expendunt; alia panduntur inanes

Suspense ad ventos: aliis sub gurgite vasto

Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni.

Quique suos patimur manes, exinde per amplum

Mittimur Elyzium, & pauci lata arva tenemus:

Donec longa dies perfectio temporis orbe

Concretam exemit labem, parumque reliquit

Ætheraum sensum, atque aurai simplicis ignem.

Has omnes, ubi mille rotam volvere per annos,

Lethæum ad fluvium Deus evocat agmine magno:

Scilicet immemores supera ut convexa revisant

Rursus, & incipiant in corpora velle reverti.

Know first, that heav'n and earth's compacted frame;

And flowing waters, and the starry flame,

And both the radiant lights, one common soul

Inspires, and feeds, and animates the whole.

This active mind, infus'd through all the space;

Unites and mingles with the mighty mass:

Hence men and beasts the breath of life obtain,

And birds of air, and monsters of the main.

Th' ætherial vigour is in all the same,

And ev'ry soul is fill'd with equal flame:

As much as earthly limbs, and gross alloy

Of mortal members subject to decay;

Burn not the beams of heaven, and edge of day.

From this coarse mixture of terrestrial parts,

Desire and fear by turns possess their hearts,

And grief and joy: Nor can the groveling mind,

In the dark dungeon of the limbs confin'd,

Assert the native skies; or own its heavenly kind.

Nor Death itself can wholly wash their stains;

But long contracted filth ev'n in the soul remains.

The

The reliques of invet'rate vice they wear,
 And spots of sin obscene in ev'ry face appear:
 For this are various penances enjoin'd,
 And some are hung to bleach upon the wind;
 Some plung'd in waters, others purg'd in fires,
 'Till all the dregs are drain'd, and all the rust expires:
 All have their manes, and those manes bear,
 The few so cleans'd to the abodes repair,
 And breathe, in ample fields, the soft *Elysian* air. }
 Then are they happy, when by length of time
 The scurf is worn away of each committed crime:
 No speck is left of their habitual stains,
 But the pure æther of the soul remains.
 But when a thousand rolling years are past,
 (So long their punishments and penance last)
 Whole droves of minds, are by the driving God
 Compell'd to drink the deep *Lethæan* flood,
 In large forgetful draughts, to sleep the cares
 Of their past labours, and their irksome years,
 That, unrememb'ring of its former pain,
 The soul may suffer mortal flesh again. DRYDEN.

It is not our business here to enquire whether our Poet adopts this opinion for his own or not; it is enough that he has made use of it on this occasion to introduce what followed. Yet after all, he has not been able, in the opinion of many Criticks, to give that anticipation such an air of probability altogether as could be wished: for he there represents several of them in postures and habits agreeable to what the Heroes were afterwards to wear when they returned to animate their several bodies. This, say they, could not naturally be supposed; for how should they have this knowledge of futurity? either they were purified from the corruption of their former bodies, or not: If they were, and had drunk of the waters of Forgetfulness, or *Lethe*, how could they know what was to come, when they could not so much as recollect what was past? and if they had not been purified, then they had still the stains contracted in their bodies upon them, and their minds possessed with the same anxieties that had attended them in their former life. But

But it is probable, the Poet supposes them already purged from the corruptions of their former life, and prepared, by a foreknowledge of what was to happen in their next stage of life, to enter upon it with more satisfaction. And pursuing this notion a little farther, we may imagine this foreknowledge may be justly granted them as a reward for their former virtuous life; it seeming more reasonable, according to *Pythagoras* and *Plato's* scheme, that they should be rewarded by animating the souls of Heroes, who had before deserved it by their virtue in a more obscure station. Perhaps this supposition we have here made, may serve to render this Episode more probable.

We will now pursue our comparison between the *Latin* and *Greek* Poet. If *Æneas* has a much clearer knowledge and information of things, upon his descent into Hell, than *Ulysses*, the *Latin* Poet has no less advantage of the *Greek*, in chusing a proper time for representing his Games; which, as an occasion of magnificence, a Heroe may be allowed to exhibit. But the heat of the action is not vainly to be interrupted, or Episodes made on purpose for it; as those in *Statius*, celebrated on the death of *Archemorus*. The Episode of him and *Erisipile* having no visible connection with the principal action, can be said to have no other reason of being brought in there, but for the sake of the Games which follow. And *Homer* has staid too long before he presented his, the action being wholly at an end; which is much like tacking a Farce to the end of a good Play; or like a traveller's baiting within a mile of his journey's end. *VIRGIL* takes a proper occasion to divert the Reader from the melancholy consideration of *Dido's* death, and on a proper day, the anniversary of his Father's decease, which is paying a just tribute to his memory: Besides that, his soldiers having suffered very much before, and lain by some time since, it was both necessary to animate their drooping spirits by the hopes of the Prizes to be distributed on this occasion, and to prepare for action by these exercises.

THE truth is, several have been unwilling to judge as they found between the two Poets; not considering that several of these advantages which *VIRGIL* may justly claim

over *Homer*, though they add to his merit, yet in the other, bring very often their own excuse along with them; especially what is objected to him with regard to the manners of his Heroes, and the machinery of his Gods. For this reason I have not so much insisted as I might have done on these two articles. Besides, none dare pronounce that *VIRGIL* would have been without these blemishes, had he lived in *Homer's* age; or that the latter would have had them, had he lived in the *Augustan*.

HOMER is like a prodigious gem of inestimable value; that has not felt the Artist's last hand. *VIRGIL's* a jewel which loses nothing of its intrinsic value, though somewhat smaller for cutting; wherein the nicest art adorning nature, shews all its beauties in the truest light, and leaves not the least flaw discernable by the most curious eye. After all, the *Latin Poet* desires no greater compliment should be made him, than what he himself paid to *Augustus*, and is content to share the Bays with the *Gracian*.

Divisum Imperium cum Jove Caesar habet.

Which Epigram, by the bye, cannot be surpassed by the best to be met with in *Martial*.

ONE might have thought them as equal in learning, as they are in genius, had we only seen the *Æneid*; but the *Georgicks* are a sufficient conviction to an unprejudiced mind, that *VIRGIL* has herein surpassed him: which indeed is not to be wondered at, if we make the just allowances for the different ages they lived in.

LEARNING was certainly brought to no great pitch in *Homer's* time; and what he had acquired was no doubt owing to his singular abilities, which he had happily improved by his travels. A *Greek* that stayed at home being unlikely to be master of any great stock of learning; all the wise men of his and several of the succeeding ages becoming such by their acquirements in the Eastern Countries, and particularly *Ægypt*. In *VIRGIL's* time, most arts had long flourished among the *Greeks*, and were now
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in as flourishing a state among the *Romans*, who were grown familiar with, and very fond of them, since the conquest of *Greece*, which subdued their unpolished minds, at the same time that they were forced to yield to the strength of their arms.

*Gracia capta ferum victorem cepit, & artes
Intulit agresti Latio ———*

THEREFORE it in no wise derogates from the *Grecian's* merit to be inferior to the *Latin* in this particular; he rather deserving our highest admiration, who under such great disadvantages could make himself possessed of so large a share of learning as is visible in all his Writings; since there seems no reason to believe what some Authors have related, that he drew the principal materials of his Works from the Writings of some Poets that had preceded him.

HOWEVER, in one respect he is allowed to have discovered a greater accuracy than *VIRGIL*; that is, in his description of *Greece*, whose situation he was perfectly well acquainted with, and has described with great regularity and exactness. The *Latin* Poet is not less acquainted with the Geography of *Italy*, or less versed in its Antiquities; especially considering the much greater space of time he was removed from the age he wrote of than *Homer* was.

BUT for this very reason, though the exactness and method of the Catalogue in the *Iliad* was justly thought excellent, for giving the *Greeks* so good a description of their Country, at a time when perhaps they had at least no other so compleat; it is no defect, but an instance of discretion of the Author of the *Æneid*, to avoid a needless ostentation of his learning, by neglecting the same exactness in his Accounts of this nature: since at the time when he wrote, it is well known the *Roman* valour had extended its conquests over the best part of the known world. And, besides the many good accounts of *Italy* to be found among their own Writers, and particular of its Antiquities in *Cato's Origines*, the *Latin* Tongue being

now

now become universal, the curiosity of the *Greeks* had employed several of their learned men in giving descriptions of *Italy*. So that either this remark escaped Mr. *Pope*, which is unlikely; or what is more probable, he purposely set it aside, that his Author might appear with more advantage from the comparison. But indeed his arguments for it carry their own answer, they being no more than what was just before granted, the ignorance of *Horner's* times, which made the great exactness of his Catalogue the more agreeable, because it was more necessary. For the Translator himself acknowledges the style needed to be more diversified and raised, (which *VIRGIL* being aware of, has not failed to do in his;) and this he has accordingly done in his Translation, by the help of short Epithets and Descriptions, and has so far with our Author exceeded the Original.

THIS naturally leads me to compare their Style, where, though both have used the purest oar, it is evident *VIRGIL's* is more refined; so that here we shall find, he not only like *Cæsar*, owns no Superior; but, with *Pompey*, will not allow of any Competitor for the Prize.

Indeed *VIRGIL* excels all Writers, in the Purity, Elegance, and strict Propriety of his Diction, and the suitable harmony of his numbers most exactly adapted to the subject. And if there are a few objections that have been made to his repeating some expressions in different parts of his Work, and some Hemistichs left in his *Æneid*; his *Georgicks*, which he finished and corrected, never fell under this censure: and he being so accurate and diligent in the language of a Work so much inferior to the *Æneid*, we may be assured nothing but untimely death prevented his giving it the last polishing. It seems probable, he had allotted some years for reviewing it at leisure; though there wants no more, for what we are able to discover, towards its perfection, than what may be sometimes missing in the most elegant dress, where very minute circumstances may possibly make some alteration for the better, which notwithstanding are hardly missed by the most knowing. The whole Work appears like a beautiful Woman, that conscious of her own charms, has spared no cost nor labour

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to set them off by a just magnificence: A worse suit would no more become her, than inferior beauty would become so rich a dress. And yet the beauty of the Work may better be compared to *Juno's* Majesty, than to *Venus's* Charms; or rather to *Juno*, as she appeared when she had borrowed *Venus's* Girdle to make herself more lovely in her husband's eye.

As for the absurd notions of those who fancy he would have added some more Books to the *Æneid*, and prolonged the Action, if he had lived; it deserves no answer, the meanest capacity being able to conclude *Æneas's* marriage with *Lavinia*, as necessarily following upon the death of *Turnus* and *Amata*. The Destinies had long before in the Poem granted him this and his Apotheosis; and *Turnus* was the rub that *Juno* was permitted to lay in his way, to defer his happiness for a time; and this she knew to be the utmost her malice could do against him.

*Non dabitur regnis esto prohibere Latinis,
Atque immota manet fatis Lavinia conjux:
At trahere atque moras tantis licet addere rebus.*

Æneid. Lib. 7.

Grant that the Fates have firm'd by their decree
The Trojan Race to reign in Italy;
At least I can defer the nuptial day,
And with protracted wars the peace delay.

AND she knew very well that *Æneas* was to be received amongst the Gods; as *Jupiter* had promised *Venus* in the first Book, and tells *Juno* in the last:

*Indigitem Æneam scis ipsa & scire fateris
Deberi cælo fatisque ad sidera tolli.*

Æn. Lib. 12.

FARTHER than this VIRGIL could not go without assuming the character of Historian, and thereby destroying that of Epick Poet: For at this rate *Statius* and *Lucan* would be better Poets than he, with regard to the conduct of the Fable; and *Silius Italicus* outdo them all. For it is chiefly

chiefly in the artful conduct of the Fable, and the beautiful constitution of matters, that the perfection of Epick Poetry consists: But this is too well known to be any farther insisted on. So that I think we may conclude in VIRGIL's favour, that he has never yet been equalled in the essential parts of the Epick.

IN general, among the moderns, he has been more happily imitated by our Countryman *Milton* than any other; and I think *Dryden* was much too hasty, when he excluded him from the number of Epick Writers. His chief reason was, because he could not find any Heroe of the Poem; at this rate, I am afraid, the *Iliad*, as has been already said, will fall under the same censure. And though perhaps the having one may render the Poem more regular and uniform, the not strictly observing such a subordination as is necessary in that case, will give it a more enlarged and a more sublime manner. This is the case of the *Iliad*, as the former of the *Odysee*; VIRGIL hath avoided the two extremes, and though he has preserved a subordination of characters, has kept up their dignity, as far as was consistent with that of his Heroe. *Tasso*, it must be granted, has likewise some good pretensions to this title: yet I am apt to imagine that every impartial Reader that has considered *Milton* in the true light Mr. *Addison*'s Notes have placed him, will find *Tasso*, either as he is, or when he may hereafter appear in an *English* dress, can never come up to him, either for the conduct of his Design, the sublimity of his Sentiments, or the majesty of his Expressions; and I may add, the variety and harmony of his Numbers, which in *Tasso* are very much neglected.

BUT to conclude this Essay: Whether you consider VIRGIL as a Writer, or a private person, either way his character is admirable: the fine genius recommends the one; and the good, the modest, the generous, and the sincere man the other. The honours he so unwillingly received, and to his power declined in his life-time, he has amply enjoyed (and shall do, whilst Poetry, the first and loveliest of Arts, is valued) since his death. And if men have not discovered all that superstition in their ve-

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neration for his memory, which has befallen *Homer*, he has been as really valued, though less extravagantly praised, because better understood. And it is as much to his honour, that *Augustus* snatched his *Æneid* out of the flames, to which his severe modesty had devoted it for wanting his last hand, as that *Alexander* made the rich Casket of *Darius* the repository of the *Iliad*.



THE



THE
L I F E
O F
H O R A C E.



ORACE was born in *Venusium*, a Town of *Apulia*, or of *Lucania*, the Poet himself leaving the point undecided :

—— *Lucanus, an Appulus, anceps,
Nam venusinus aras finem sub utrumq; colonus?*
Sat. 1. Lib. 2.

For whether I my birth t' *Apulia* owe,
Or to *Lucania*, faith 'tis hard to know,
Since we *Venusians* live between these two.

CREECH.

His birth-day fell on the 8th of *December*, in the year of *Rome* 688, about three years after the breaking out of *Cataline's* Conspiracy, in the Consulship of *L. Corra* and *L. Manlius Torquatus*, as we may learn from the 21st Ode of the first Book :

O nata mecum Consule Manlio, &c.

HIS Father was no more than the Son of a Freed-man and a Tax-gatherer, which mean descent he was often reproached with.

Quem omnes rodunt libertino patre natum.

———— The Son of a Freed-man,
Whom envious eyes and envious tongues pursue.

CREECH.

HE staid in the place of his birth 'till ten years of age, when his Father removed him to Rome, and there brought him up in the following excellent manner. Being a person of good sense himself, though not very learned, he thought it not sufficient to instruct his Son by bare precept; but setting before him the example of persons most remarkably virtuous or vicious, he shewed him what part of their behaviour best deserved his imitation, and what he should endeavour to avoid: which he confirmed, by observing to him the good effects of the one, and the ill consequences of the other. This was a very laudable method, and the fine old man in the *Adelphi* of Terence had the same just notions. "I use him (says he, speaking of his Son) to look into and examine the conduct of others; and from their lives, bid him take a pattern for his own: Do this, shun that; this is praise-worthy, that amiss. *Consuefacio (inquit) inspicere tanquam in speculum in vitas omnium; jubeo atque ex aliis sumere exemplum sibi, hoc facito, & hoc fugito; hoc laudi est, hoc vitio datur.*"

THIS reasonable way of education was not much practised at this time in Rome; it was thought sufficient to make their Children fit for business, and able to bustle through the world; but HORACE's prudent Father esteemed it more satisfactory to see him one day poor and virtuous, like himself, than paving his way to wealth and preferment by baseness and knavery. We have this account partly in the sixth Satyr of the first Book.

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*Si neque avaritiam, neque sordes, ac mala lustra
Obijciat vere quisquam mihi; purus & insons
(Ut me collaudem) si vivo, & carus amicis,
Causa fuit pater his* —————

If only little stains do spot my soul,
As perfect beauties often have a mole;
Though I'm secure, and free from all the foul.
If none on me can truly fix disgrace,
If I am neither covetous nor base;
If innocent my life; if, to commend
My self, I live belov'd by ev'ry friend:
I thank my Father for't —————

CREECH.

AND having told us he neglected the common methods, he goes on to inform us, that he bred him up himself with great care.

*Ipse mihi custos incorruptissimus omnes
Circum doctores aderat* —————

Ibid.

Himself my careful'st Guardian watch'd me still.

CREECH.

IN the mean time he wanted not for good masters, that he might be in all points brought up as became a Gentleman, and therefore he soon brought him to Rome.

*—Puerum est ausus Romam portare docendum
Artes, quas doceat quivis eques atque Senator
Semet prognatos* —————

Ibid.

He boldly brought me up a child to town,
To see those ways, and make those arts my own,
Which ev'ry Knight and Noble taught his Son.

CREECH.

WHEN he was about eighteen, he was sent to Athens, where he compleated what his Father had so well begun, and acquired all those accomplishments, that polite learning, added to an ingenuous education, could give him.

*Roma nutrir mihi contigit, atque doceri,
Iratu Graius quantum nocuisset Achilles;
Adjecere bona paulo plus artis Athena:
Scilicet ut possem curvo dignoscere rectum,
Atque inter Silvas Academi querere verum.*

Ep. 2. Lib. 2.

Rome bred me first, she taught me Grammar Rules,
And all the little Authors read in schools;
A little more than this learn'd Athens shew'd,
And taught me how to sep'rate bad from good.
The Academick Sect possess'd my youth,
And 'midst their pleasant shades I fought for truth.

CREECH.

BEING thus qualified to set out in the world, and *Brutus* about this time going to *Macedonia*, as he passed through *Athens*, he took several young Gentlemen from thence to the Army with him, and *HORACE* among the rest; his merit soon recommended him to that great man, and he was made a Tribune. By what happened afterwards it is visible *HORACE* could not pretend to the Tribuneship for his valour; and it would be but an indifferent reason for *Brutus's* making him an officer sooner than others, because he had more wit. Without injuring our Poet, we may conjecture, *Brutus* was pretty much frightened for Officers and Soldiers at that time, and therefore was forced to be content with such as he could get. This honourable post could not supply that courage nature had denied him; for at the Battle of *Philippi* he left the field and fled, having first shamefully thrown away his shield.

PERHAPS it may not be amiss to let the Reader observe in this place, that among the Antients, to throw away the Shield, was reckoned a very dishonourable action. According to *Plutarch*, it was thought more scandalous for a Man to throw that away than his sword or helmet; and the reason there given is, because the shield is of general service to the rest of the army; but those other weapons are only beneficial to the person himself. There

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is a remarkable Instance of the ignominy that attended such a loss, related by *Justin* of *Epaminondas*: Being mortally wounded in the Battle of *Mantineæ*, as they carried him off to his tent, with looks full of concern, he enquired of those that attended, whether the Enemy had taken up his Shield when he fell: understanding it was safe, and brought to him, he eagerly took and kissed it, as the companion of his labour and glory: And we find the Poet readily acknowledging it for a base action, in the Ode to his Friend *Pompeius Varus*, who was with him in the same Battle of *Philippi*, and accompanied him in his flight.

*Tecum Philippos, & celeram fugam
Sensî, relicta non bene parmula.* Od. 7. Lib. 2.

THAT which perhaps saved his life, could not secure his estate, which he forfeited; for being on the weaker side, it became, with those of others, a Prey to the Conquerors.

BEING thus reduced to want, that friend to ingenuity, he set himself to write Poetry, wherein his wit and genius rendered him so successful, that he soon made himself known to some of the greatest men at *Rome*. That happy age was blest with a *Mecenas*, one that united in his person the several qualities of the Statesman and fine Gentleman; the perfect Courtier, and generous Patron of Arts and Desert.

THE Poet has told us in *Sat. 6. Lib. 1.* that *Virgil* was the first that recommended him to *Mecenas*:

*Nulla etenim mihi te fors obtulit: optimus olim
Virgilius, post hunc Varius, dixere quid essem.*

HORACE, at twenty six years of age, was so intimate with *Mecenas*, that he accompanied him to *Brundisium*, with *Virgil* and others, as we read in *Sat. 5. Lib. 1.* from whence it is evident, he must have seen the *Georgicks* of *Virgil*, who was four years older than he, and which *Virgil* published, when himself was forty one, and *Horace* thirty seven years of age.

HORACE soon became known to him, and grew very much in his favour; so that he became a suitor for him to *Augustus*, and got his estate to be restored, and recommended him to that Prince; who, being taken with his merit and address, admitted him to a great familiarity in his more private hours, and afterwards made him no small offers of preferment. The Poet had the greatness of mind to refuse them all; and the Prince was generous enough not to be offended at his freedom in doing so. A man indeed must perfectly be of that indifferent temper his Writings speak him to have been of, with respect to the pride and ostentation of life, and the vanities of a court, to refuse a place so honourable and advantageous, as that of his Secretary. The life he liked best and lived as much as he could, was the reverse of a Court life, in a retirement free from the hurry and trouble that attend the ambitious. For he does but rally, when he says he loves to change:

Roma Tibur amo ventosus, Tibure Roman.

As it was his peculiar talent to be always agreeable, and when he would glance at others to banter himself: So that we may observe, that other Poets have often shewn their Art in their descriptions of the country, and rural pleasures; but *Virgil* excepted, HORACE seems to have employed more natural and feeling expressions than any; wherein he is always as poetical, generally more natural, as shall be shewn in its place.

GROWING still more intimate with *Mecenas*, he had the opportunity to discover all the amiable Parts of his character, which wonderfully endeared his Patron to him, and made him conceive a very tender friendship for him; all which he has very affectionately discovered in an Ode occasioned by a fit of sickness that endangered *Mecenas's* life.

— Ille dies utramque
Ducet ruinam: non ego perfidum
Dixi sacramentum: ibimus, ibimus,

Utrunque

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*Uicunque pracedes, Supremum
Carpere iter comites parati.*

Lib. 2. Od. 17.

Thus hand in hand we'll greet the shades,
'Tis so resolv'd and fix'd by Fate;
I'll follow where *Mecenas* leads,
Our lives shall have one common date.

OLDSWORTH.

SOME time after his being in favour at Court, *Augustus* found it necessary to clap up a peace with *Anthony*, the better to destroy young *Pompey*, their common enemy; who not long after this came to an open rupture with *Augustus*. To this end, they sent some persons as their Deputies, to conclude the treaty between them. *Mecenas* going on *Caesar's* part, HORACE with *Virgil*, and others, accompanied him thither. The Poet has most agreeably described this journey in the fifth *Satire* of his first Book. It happened in the Consulship of *Pollio*, who was about that time writing a History of the Civil Wars for the last twenty years. HORACE from hence took an opportunity to write the first Ode of the second Book to him, representing the many inconveniencies such a Work must necessarily expose him to.

*Periculosa plenum opus alea
Tractas, & incedis per ignes
Suppositos cineri doloso.*

Hard is the task.

You tread on quicksands, pass through fires:

Justly imagining it might ruin him with *Augustus*, if he mentioned the true causes of the Civil War between *Caesar* and *Pompey*, and their motives to begin it.

Dacier, in his Chronology of the Life of *Horace*, seems to have pretty happily fixed the time of writing some of his *Odes* and *Epistles*, but owns he cannot reduce the greater part to any fixed time; but *Dr. Bentley* has made a much greater progress. However, from them it appears, that before he was thirty, the Poet had introduced

himself to the acquaintance of the most considerable Persons in *Rome*, of which his *Ode* to *Pollio* is a sufficient instance. For I think his merit must have been pretty well known, and his reputation established, before he could take so much liberty, as he has there done, with one of *Pollio's* high character: Though it was not so extraordinary in antient *Rome*, to find the greatest freedom between a person of consular dignity, and a man of good sense, though mean fortune. The familiarity *Scipio* and *Laelius* honoured *Terence* with, is well known: And the Elder *Cato's* friendship for *Ennius*, who accompanied him into *Sardinia*, during his *Prætorship* there, is another remarkable instance, and so much the more to be taken notice of, in a person of *Cato's* severe character; and the friendship and value *Cicero* had and discovered in his *Epistles* for his freed-man *Tyro*, confirms this generosity of temper in that People. This *Augustus* was very far from stifling; by his own example encouraging humanity and condescension in the great men about him: for he rather would be thought and stiled the Guardian of the Republick, than what indeed he was, its absolute Prince. He being so gracious a master, it was no wonder if the greatest persons followed him herein, and chose to use their power, rather by obliging, than oppressing those below them. If *HORACE*, having such patrons and friends, was not rich, it was the moderation of his mind, not the narrowness of their bounty that kept him from it. In the first *Ode* of his fifth Book, professing his readiness to attend his beloved *Mecenas* to *Epirus* in the war against *Anthony*; he assures him it is not out of interest: for says he,

*Satis superque me, benignitas tua
Ditavit.* —————

Your bounty gave my present store,
'Tis all I want, nor will I ask no more.

OLDSWORTH.

It raises his character, that being formed with all the talents requisite to a court life, he preferred retirement.

It

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It was an argument of his wisdom in choosing that betimes, which all wish to come to at last, as he has himself observed :

————— *Hac mente laborem*
Sese ferre, senes ut in otia tuta recedant. Sat. 1. Lib. 1.

NOR did he altogether bury his talents, and keep them useless by him, using them so far, 'till he had wrought himself into the Emperor's favour, and was master of such a competency, as left him at full liberty to retire and enjoy the fruits of his Patron's bounty. See how sensibly he describes the charms of his little Villa, or Seat at *Tibur*, and that in the Country of the *Tarentines*. The first is *Ep. 16. Lib. 1. to Quintius*.

Continui montes, nisi dissocientur opaca
Valle: sed ut veniens dextrum latus aspiciat sol,
Levum discedens curru fugiente vaporet:
Temperiem laudes; quid, si rubicunda benigne
Corna vepres & pruna ferant? si quercus & ilex
Multa fruge pecus, multa dominum juvet umbra?
Dicas adductum propius frondere Tarentum.
Fons etiam rivo dare nomen idoneus, ut nec
Frigidior Thracam, nec purior ambiat Hebrus;
Infirmo capiti fuit utilis, utilis alvo.
Hæ latebra dulces, etiam, si credis, amœnæ,
Incolumem tibi me præstant septembribus horis.

A ridge of hills a shady vale divides,
 And takes the Sun's kind rays on both her sides;
 The right hand opens to the rising day,
 The left hand gently takes the setting ray.
 You like the clime; if ev'ry hedge that grows
 Doth blush in Cornils, or doth mourn in Sloes;
 If beachen groves and fruitful oaks afford
 Meat for my cattle, shades for me their Lord:
 You'd think *Tarentum's* pleasant fields remove
 To wait on me, and spread a shady grove.
 A pleasant spring, almost a river, flows,
 Not *Heber's* streams the *Thracian* fields inclose,

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With waves more cool and clear; the waters spread
To purge the stomach good, and cleanse the head:
These pleasant, nay 'tis true, these sweet retreats,
Preserve my health amidst the summer's heats.

CREECH.

THE other is more poetically set out to view, in
Ode 6. Book 2.

*Tibur Argæo positum colono
Sit mea sedes utinam senectæ!
Sit modus lasso maris, & viarum,
Militiæque!*

*Unde si parca prohibent iniquæ,
Dulce pellitis ovibus Galesi
Flumen, & regnata petam Laconi
Rura Phalanto.*

*Ille terrarum mihi præter omnes
Angulus ridet; ubi non Hymetto
Mella decedunt, viridisque certat
Bacca Venafro:*

*Ver ubi longum, tepidasque præbet
Jupiter brumas, & amicus Aulon
Fertili Baccho, minimum Falernis
Invidet uvæ.*

*Ille te mecum locus, & beatæ
Postulant arces: ibi tu calentem
Debita sparges lachryma facillam
Vatis amici,*

Yet still I wish that Tibur's seat
May be my last, my sweet retreat;
Where I may rest from dangers free,
Wearied with toils by land and sea:
Or let the Fates indulgent bless
Their fav'rite with a safe recess;

Where

Where fair *Galesus* waters run,
 And fam'd *Phalantus* fix'd his throne :
 There's not a corner of the earth
 So form'd for plenty, joy, and mirth ;
 No richer land, no better soil,
 Afford such honey, or such oil ;
 Here neither heat nor cold can hurt,
 The springs are long, the winters short :
 Nor can *Falernian* Hills produce
 A better vine, a nobler juice.
 Here you and I may gently pass
 The sweet remainder of our days ;
 Here when your friend, your HORACE dies,
 You shall observe his Obsequies ;
 Kindly his glowing ashes mourn,
 And drop a tear into his Urn. OLDSWORTH.

LET us hear him once more describing the charms of
 a Country Life, in his Epistle to his Friend *Fuscus Ariftius*,
 who was a lover of the Town, as he calls him, *Urbis*
Amatorem.

*Vivere natura ſi convenienter oportet,
 Ponendaque domo quarenda eſt area primum,
 Nirviſtine locum potiore ſine rure beato ?
 Eſt ubi plus tepeant hiemes ? ubi gravior aura
 Leniat & rabiem canis, & momenta leonis,
 Cum ſemel accepit ſolem furibundus acutum ?
 Eſt ubi depellat ſomnos minus invida cura ?
 Deterius Libycis olet aut nitet herba lapillis ?
 Purior in vicis aqua tendit rumpere plumbum,
 Quam qua per pronum trepidat cum murmure rivum ?*

Do you a life to nature's rules deſign,
 And ſeek ſome fit foundation to begin
 Some baſis where this happy frame to raiſe ?
 The quiet Country is the fitteſt place.
 Where is the winter's cold more mild than here ?
 And when the Sun aſcends and burns the year,
 Where does a more delightful wind aſſuage
 The Dog-Star's fury, or the Lion's rage ?

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Or where do envious cares break fewer dreams?
Do flower's shine, or smell less sweet than gems?
Are streams more pure that leaden pipes convey,
Than those fair springs, that with their wanton play,
And gentle murmurs, eat their easy way?

CREECH.

I CHOSE to quote these passages in this place, because though they are extremely fine, and the descriptions very just, there reigns throughout both an air of sensibility, that tells the Reader he felt and tasted all the pleasures he describes. Before he had altogether retired, he thus writes to his Bailly in the country :

*Me constare mihi scis, & discedere tristem,
Quandocunque trahunt invita negotia Romam.*

Lib. i. Ep. 14.

I constant to my self, part griev'd from home,
When hated business forces me to Rome. CREECH.

FOR he desired to live the remainder of his life to himself.

*Sit mihi, quod nunc est, etiam minus, ut mihi vivam
Quod superest avi —————
Sit bona librorum, & provisa frugis in annum
Copia, ne fluitem dubia spe pendulus hora.
Hac satis est orare fovem —————
Det vitam, det opes, aequum mi animum ipse parabo.*

Lib. i. Ep. 18.

Let me have what I have, or somewhat less,
'Twill still be great enough for happiness :
And that I may, if Heaven more years would give,
Live to my self the time I have to live.
Estate in books, and food to serve a year,
Lest I should wav'ring hang 'twixt hope and fear :
And this is all for which mankind should pray
And beg of Jove —————

Let

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Let him but life and mod'rate plenty find,
And I'll provide my self a happy mind. CREECH.

HIS desire to retire, increasing with his age, he took up the resolution at length, and his friends making no use of that authority they might claim over him, laid no restraint upon his inclination.

FOR some years before this, he used only to be at Rome in the spring, spending the summer in the country, and the winter he frequently passed at *Tarentum*. He has hinted as much in an Epistle to *Mecenas*, where he first excuses himself for not returning to him at Rome in *August*; having promised to spend but a few days in the country; then he goes on.

*Quod si bruma nives Albanis illinet agris,
Ad mare descendet vates tuus, & sibi parceret,
Contractusque leget; te, dulcis amice, reviset
Cum Zephyris, si concedes, & hirundine prima.*

Lib. I. Ep. 7.

If winter's sharp, and spreads the fields with snows,
Down to the sea-side then the Poet goes;
There study little, and take soft repose:
And then when spring returns, and Swallows come,
I'll see you, if you please, my Lord, at Rome.

HERE, it seems, as if he retired to *Tarentum*, only when the winter was too sharp at Rome, because of the mild air of that place. It is certain he delighted in both places, *Tibur* and *Tarentum*, and has given the preference to the former in the *Ode*, where he finely describes the pleasures of the latter. In his retirement, he was so fully resolved to enjoy himself, that he would never make any use of this opportunity to set about a Work of any length, however fit for it.

—— *Paupertas impulit audax
Ut versus facerem; sed, quod non desit, habentem,
Quæ poterant unquam satis expurgare cicuta,
Ni melius dormire putem, quam scribere versus*

Lib. II. Ep. 2.

Bold poverty, first drew me on to write,
 But now I have enough to keep off want :
 What Hellebore cou'd cure my wild disease,
 Should I prefer my Muse before my ease. CREECH.

THIS Epistle was HORACE's last Work, and compos'd the year before he died, when he had taken his last leave, as one may say, of the world, and was fix'd in his retirement ; and consequently what he there says, may be justly looked upon as his real sentiments. It is not unlikely, he had been sollicit'd to it by his Patron *Mecenas* ; and *Augustus* himself, seem'd in some measure, to expect it of him. See how nobly and sublimely he excuses himself to that Prince !

— Nec sermones ego malle
 Repentes per humum, quam res componere gestas,
 Terrarumque situs, & flumina dicere, & arces
 Montibus impositas, & barbarea regna, tuisque
 Auspiciis totum consecrata duella per orbem,
 Clausuraque custodem pacis cohibentia Janum;
 Et formidatum Parthis, te principe, Romam.

Lib. II. Ep. 1.

'Ere I desire to leave the humble plain,
 I wou'd be high, and write a lofty strain :
 I wish I could describe your way, and show
 How barb'rous nations fear, and how they bow :
 How you have raz'd their towns, their oceans stain'd
 With blood, and with strong tow'rs have bound their land:
 How war's exil'd, and peace and plenty reign,
 And *Janus's* temple once more shut again :
 How mean, and how submissive *Parthians* come :
 How under thee, they fear and honour Rome. CREECH.

IN another place, he makes his friend *Trebatius* advise him to Heroick Poetry, rather than writing Satires, as the nobler and more honourable way. The Poet knew his Prince deserv'd it of him, but he was unwilling to sacrifice his repose, or rather declin'd invading another's province.

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vince. As it is generally observable that the greatest Poets are content to excel in one or two kinds, *Varius* was at that time, according to the testimony of *HORACE*, the best Heroick Poet.

—— Forte epus acer
Ut *Varius* nemo ducit. ——

AND in Ode VI. Lib. I. to *Agrippa*, he compares him to *Homer*.

*Scriberis Vario fortis, & hostium
Victor, Maonij carminis alite.*

HERE he comes off with the same excuse, but has let the Reader see, he was able to do more than he was willing to undertake.

—— Cupidum, pater optime vires
Deficiunt, neque enim quivis horrentia pilis
Agmina, nec fracta pereuntes cuspide Gallos,
Aut labentis equo describat vulnera Parthi. Lib. II. Ep. 1.

I have the will, but when I strive to fly,
My wing's too weak, nor can I rise so high :
For 'tis not ev'ry one can paint a war,
How iron armies dreadful gay appear.
The *Galli* falling by a braver force,
And wounded *Parthians* tumbling from their horse.

CREECH.

THUS he avoided the fatigue of a long work ; but his gratitude to *Augustus*, called upon him sometimes to employ his Muse in singing his triumphs over *Pompey* and *Antony*, or the victorious exploits of *Tiberius* and *Drusus*.

HIS *Carmen Seculare*, he composed at the express command of *Augustus* ; and for him he wrote his first Epistle of Lib. II. That Prince having kindly reproached him, that in his writings he had said so little of him ; and asked him in a letter written on this occasion, If he thought it would disgrace him with posterity, to mention the name

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name of *Augustus* too often in his works. And I believe the Reader need scarce be told how handsomely he has excused himself in the first lines of that Epistle. The compliment he makes him, presently after in the same Epistle, is very fine and delicate, and enough to make amends for a long silence. After he had observed, that the greatest Heroes, are the objects of the publick envy, when living, though they are justly honoured after death, he goes on to point the excellency of his virtues, who deserved such extraordinary honours in his life-time.

*Præsentî tibi maturos largimur honores,
Furandaque tuum per nomen ponimus aras,
Nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale fatentes.*

Lib. II. Ep. 1.

To thee, great *Cæsar*, now we altars give ;
We vow and swear by thee, now whilst alive :
For never yet the Gods kind hands bestow'd,
Nor ever will a Prince, so great, so good. CREECH.

AUGUSTUS's complaint of our Author, seems rather a kind expostulation with him, than directly taxing him of neglect, who seems not to have been wanting in this respect, as we shall have occasion to shew in treating more particularly of his works.

THE favour he was in at Court, where he was thought to have the Prince's Ear, and to be in the secret of all affairs, made many apply to him, either to satisfy their curiosity, or to be advanced by his recommendation. In this latter respect, he was very cautious how he proceeded, according to his own rule.

*Qualem commendes etiam atque etiam inspicere, ne max
Incutiant aliena tibi peccata pudorem.* Lib. I. Ep. 18.

Praise none, 'till well approv'd on sober thoughts,
Lest after, you should blush for other's faults. CREECH.

WHEN he was confident of any one's merit, as in the case of his friend *Septimius*, he thought it was always tickling

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ticklish point, that should be handled with a great deal of dexterity ; as will appear from that Epistle, where he recommends him to *Tiberius* ; which he thus artfully, and at the same time advantageously to his friend, concludes ;

———— *Quod si*
Depositi laudas ob amici iussa pudorem,
Scribe tui gregis hunc, & fortem crede bonumque.

Lib. I. Ep. 9.

I boldly ask ; now if you can commend
My boldness in the service of my friend,
Accept *Septimius*, let him fill your train :
I promise him a stout and honest man.

CREECH.

As for the curious Gentlemen, he has very agreeably described them buzzing about him, and plaguing him with their impertinent questions ; and when they could get nothing out of him, admiring his discretion and silence.

———— *Mirantur ut unum*
Scilicet egregii mortalem, atque silenti:

BEING himself, above making any low advantages of his Prince's favour, and exempt from arrogance, his free spirit could not bear it in others ; and in an Epistle to *Celsus*, *Tiberius's* Secretary, who was grown perhaps a little too proud of his post, he roundly tells him,

Ut tu fortunam, sic nos te, Celse, feremus.

We will bear you, as you your fortune bear. CREECH.

He had given into the *Epicurean* Philosophy in his younger years, but a little more reflection and experience, made him retract his error, and turn *Stoick*.

Parvus deorum cultor, & infrequens,
Insanientis dum sapientia
Consultus erro ; nunc retrorsum

Vela

*Vela dare, atque iterare cursus
Cogor relictos. ———*

Lib. I. Ode 34.

Once I contemn'd the Gods, their pow'r deny'd,
When frantick *Epicurus* was my guide :
But now that vain Philosophy I scorn :
At once to common Sense and Virtue I return. *Creech.*

HE mentions as one great motive to his recantation that it thundered and lightened in a pure sky. This Phenomenon he looked upon as altogether unaccountable from any natural principles, and as a strong argument of an over-ruling Providence.

——— *Namque diespiter,
Igni corusco nubila dividens,
Plerumque, per purum tonantes
Egit equos, volucremque currum.*

Ibid.

Jove spoke the loud conviction from on high,
And hurl'd his bolts and chariots through the sky :
Compas'd with glory, and with flames he rode,
And all the subject world confess'd their sovereign God.
OLDSWORTH.

IN *Sat. 6. Lib. 1.* having pleasantly shewn the uneasiness that attends a great fortune, he gives a particular account of his own way of living, as follows :

——— *Quacunque libido est,
Incedo solus : percuntor quanti olus ac far ;
Fallacem circum, vespertinumque pererro
Sape forum : assisto divinis : inde domum me
Ad porri & ciceris refero, lachanisque catinum.
Coena ministratur † pueris tribus : & lapis albus*

† The Latin *puer*, signifies a Servant in general, and not a Boy in this place, as it does in all the ancient Writers, when they speak of Servants. But the Errors of this Translator are almost infinite, and I hope the English Reader will not judge of *Horace* by *Creech's*, or any Translation.

Pocula

*Pocula cum cyatho duo sustinet, adstat echinus
Vilis, cum patera guttus, Campana supellex.*

Deinde eo dormitum —————

*Ad quartam jaceo : post hanc vagor : aut ego lecto,
Aut scripto, quod me tacitum juvet, ungor oliva ;
Ast ubi me fessum sol acrior ire lavatum
Admonuit, fugio rabiosi tempora signi.
Præsum non avide, quantum interpellat inani
Ventre diem durare, domesticus otior.* —————

I walk alone where'er my fancy lead,
And busie ask the price of herbs and bread :
Thro' cheating Rome about the close of day
I freely walk, I go to Church and pray ;
Then home, where, I shall find a sparing treat,
And three small pretty Boys bring up the meat.
Just by a white-stone-table stands, to bear
Two posts, one cup, and equal to my fare
A cruise and platter, all poor earthen ware.
And then I go to bed and take my rest. ————
I sleep 'till ten, then walk, or read a while,
Or write for pleasure, 'noint my self with oil.
But when that heat invites the cooler streams,
I bathe, and fly the fury of the beams :
I eat not greedily, but just enough
To stay my stomach, and keep hunger off. CREECH.

We have another proof of his temperate diet and moderation of mind, in his Ode to Apollo.

————— *Me pa'cunt oliva,
Me cichorea levesque malva ;
Frui paratis & valido mihi,
Latoe, dones, & precor integra
Cum mente ; nec turpem senectam
Degere, nec cithara carentem.*

Lib. I. Ode 31.

Herbs and roots and olives please
My taste, as well as nobler cheer
Give me strength and pow'r to use
The sweets of life that glide away ;

Let

Let me still enjoy my muse,
Nor ever doat whilst I decay. OLD SWORTH.

FROM these instances, we may discover he was of a chearful temper, fond of ease and liberty, but ready to serve his friend, and grateful to his benefactors: of a tender and amorous disposition, as his Odes plainly discover; something warm and passionate, as he tells us himself, but soon pacified.

Iraſci celerem tamen, ut placabilis eſſem. Ep. XX Lib. I.

HE was very ſhort and corpulent, as *Auguſtus* in a Letter to him informs us, comparing him to the Book he ſent him, which was a little thick Volume. He was grey-haired about forty, of a weak complexion, and ſubject to have ſore eyes, which made him uſe little exerciſe; and one that could bear heat better than cold: This made him ſo often ſpend the winter-ſeaſon at *Tarentum*, that lies in the warmeſt climate of all *Italy*.

Corporis exigui, præcanum, ſolibus aptum. Ibid.

HE loved good company, and a chearful glaſs; but being a perſon of an elegant taſte in converſation, he affected an entire freedom, and that the glaſs ſhould circulate, or ſtand ſtill at the diſcretion of his gueſts.

*Siccat inæquales calices conviva ſolutus
Legibus inſanis.* ——— Ibid.

HE was a Man of a very chearful temper, and much gaiety, and gave pretty far into the gallantries of the age, till time ſtole in upon his amours; but even fifty could not ſave him: Love returned to the charge, and after he had for ſome time bid farewel to it, made him feel his power, as he agreeably tells us in his fiſt Ode of the fourth Book.

Inſer:

Intermissa Venus d'iu

Rursum bella moves ? parce, precor, precor.

Non sum qualis eram bona

Sub regno Cynara. Desine dulcium

Mater seva Cupidinum,

Circa lustra decem flectere mollibus

Jam durum imperiis —

After a long and lasting peace,
Venus once more disturbs my ease;
And yet my former vigour's lost,
When lovely Cinara engross'd
All hearts, and was the reigning toast.
Relentless Queen of soft desires!
O spare me, and assuage my fires!
I'm old and stiff, and cannot bear
Your Yoke.

OLDSWORTH.

AFTER this attack, he seems to have master'd his passions, and from this time liv'd in an undisturbed and Philosophical tranquillity ; so that the rest of his life, from this period, was

— *Secretum iter, & fallentis semita vita.*

He mentions in one of his Odes, three remarkable instances of Divine Protection, which, as a Poet, he attributes to the Muses, who had marked him out for their own, whilst he was yet a child : Let us hear him tell the Story himself.

Me fabulosa vulture in Appulo

Altrici extra limen Apulia

Ludo fatigatumque somno

Fronde nova puerum palumbes

Texere ; mirum quod foret omnibus,

Quicumque celsa nidum Acherontia

Salusque Bantinos & aruum

Pingue tenent humilis Ferenti :

Ut tuto ab atris corpore viperis

Dormirem

*Dormirem & ursis: ut premerer sacra
Lauroque, collataque myrto
Non sine Diis animosus insans.* Od. 4. Lib. 3.

Upon a mountain tall and steep,
When tir'd I laid me down to sleep,
Beyond *Apulia's* bounds; and round my head
Th' officious doves a verdant cov'ring spread.
'Twas wond'rous thought by all the swains,
By him who tills *Ferentum's* plains,
Or in the *Bantine* woods and forests lives,
Or on the sunny top of *Acherontia's* cliffs;
That neither snakes nor beasts of prey
Should bite or wound me where I lay;
A bold courageous youth, with Myrtle crown'd,
Whom the good Gods inspire, with guardian care
surround. OLDSWORTH.

THE three deliverances he mentions in the following Lines.

*Vestris amicum fontibus, & choris,
Non me Philippis versa acies retro,
Devota non extinxit arbor,
Nec Sicula Palmarum unda.* Ibid.

The Muses did their Poet shield
At fam'd *Philippi's* bloody field;
And from the falling tree and stormy main,
To grace their sacred spring, preserv'd their grateful
swain. OLDSWORTH.

I CANNOT but observe this one thing more of HORACE, now we are enquiring into his character, that he has shewn himself a great master of that difficult part of human conduct, that of advising others, which he always does with great sincerity, but in a very genteel manner, and often as if he did not think of it; by this means it had a better effect upon the person that received it; because there was no affectation of superiority in him that gave it; which being generally visible on these occasions,
offends

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offends that inherent pride which makes a man so unwilling to acknowledge, or be told of his faults : For instance, writing in praise of moderation, he will address it to an ambitious man, and shew him the danger of his darling passion, and the charms of contentment. Thus without touching his foible by the mention of any particulars, he shews a man the danger of the measures he pursues. The tenth Ode of *Lib. 2. to Licinius Murena*, is a fine example of what has been said : That person was brother-in-law to *Meenas*, and through his interest, had a fair opportunity of coming to preferment. This would not satisfy his restless ambition ; nor could HORACE's seasonable counsel keep him from entering into a conspiracy with *Fannius* and others, which cost him his life. In the fifteenth of *Lib. 1.* by the fate of *Troy*, which *Nereus* declares to *Paris* will attend his rape of *Helen*, *Antony* was warned not to give himself up to *Cleopatra's* charms, which must inevitably end in his ruin ; and in the preceeding Ode, he by a fine allegory, represents to his countrymen all the calamities of their civil wars, and exhorts them to peace. Having inclined to the *Stoick* Philosophy, as above-mentioned, in the latter part of his life, he consequently armed himself with their principles against the fear of death. Thus he describes his wise man, bearing up in adversity, and expecting death to put an end to any misfortunes that may befall him. This is done allegorically, under the characters of *Pentheus* and *Bacchus* ; that is, the wise man will then shew the same courage as *Bacchus* did in answering *Pentheus*, in a tragedy of *Euripides* :

*Vir bonus, & sapiens audebit dicere, Pentheu,
Rector Thebarum, quid me perferre patique
Indignum coges ? Adimam bona. Nempe pecus, rem,
Lectos, argentum. Tollas licet. In manibus &
Compedibus saxo te sub custode tenebo.
Ipse deus, simulatque volam, me solvet. Opinor
Hoc sentit : Moriar, mors ultima linea rerum.*

Lib. I. Epist. 16.

A man that's good and wise, will boldly say,
Well *Pentheus*, King of *Thebes*, why this delay?
Pray, what must I expect? what must I fear?
What, undeserv'd, must I be forc'd to bear?
I'll take away thy goods: My flocks, my land
You may, 'tis subject all to your command:
I'll chain and rob thee of thy liberty;
A God, when e'er I please, will set me free. *Creecb.*

WHILST these thoughts employed his mind, his friend and patron *Mecenas* died. HORACE did not survive him long enough to write his elegy: Possibly he was so nearly touched for his loss, that it helped to shorten his life, or whether he was attacked by some distemper immediately afterwards; it is certain, he died November 27. and *Mecenas*, as far as can be conjectured from *Dio* the Historian, the beginning of the same month. This happened six years before the Birth of Christ, in the year of Rome DCCXLV. and the fifty seventh of our Poet. He was buried near *Mecenas's* tomb; and declared in his last words *Augustus* his heir; the violence of his distemper being such, that he was not able to sign his will.

BEING confident of immortal fame from his works, he had thus expressed his indifference to any magnificent funeral rites, or fruitless sorrows for his death;

——— *Absint inani funere nenia,
Luctusque turpes & querimonia:
Compesce clamorem, ac sepulcri
Mitte supervacuos honores.*

Lib. 2. Ode 20.

Say not I dy'd, nor shed a tear,
Nor round my ashes mourn,
Nor of my needless obsequies take care;
All pomp and state is lost upon an empty Urn. *Oldsworth.*

LET us now come to look more narrowly into his works; which being of two kinds, we shall consider separately. To begin with his Odes: This kind of Poetry is that which of all other requires the greatest strength and

and elevation of Genius, and a sort of Enthusiasm that is to diffuse itself through the whole. Judgment has its share in tempering the fire of too wild a fancy, and in giving the whole an artful disposition, which is to be managed with so much the more Art, as it is to be concealed; that the work, though regular, may preserve an air of rapture and irregularity. The liveliest figures and boldest metaphors must be employ'd, and the finest and most elegant expressions sought for to clothe the noblest sentiments and brightest thoughts. The greatest subjects are its theme, and Gods, Heroes, and Princes, are the objects of the Lyrick Muse. In this he had *Pindar* for his guide; and we shall see if he has not kept up to his original, whatever his modesty made him say, that

Pindarum quisquis studet amulari,

— *Ceratis ope Dadalea*

Nititur pennis, viireo daturas

Nomina ponto.

Lib. 4. Ode 2.

He who to *Pindar's* flights would rise
With pinions not his own,

Like *Icarus* attempts the skies,
And soon shall tumble down:

OLDSWORTH.

THERE is another kind of Ode of a lower stamp, which delights in softer themes, where beauty, and the pains and joys of love are described, or the praises of *Bacchus* sung: The want of the sublime is here supplied by delicacy and elegance. If *Pindar* excelled in the former among the Greeks, *Anacreon* was unrivalled in the latter. HORACE's happier Genius sang *Augustus's* triumphs, and *Chloe's* coyness with the same success; he has all the rapture of the one, and all the softness of the other. *Alcaus*, whom he so much admired, like himself, probably excelled in both kinds; and the character he has given of him intimates no less. In one place he calls his Poems *Minaces Camæna*, speaking of their magnificent style and energy: In another, he says they were much stronger and loftier than *Sappho's*. As to his success in the tender and amorous way, he thus finely describes it.

I 2

Liberum,

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*Liberum, & Musas, Veneremque, & illi
Semper harentem puerum canebat,
Et Lycum, nigris oculis, nigroque
Crine decorum.*

Lib. 1. Ode 32.

Bacchus ever gay and young,
Venus and her boy he sung;
Lycus was his chiefest care,
Arm'd with jetty eyes and hair.

OLDSWORTH.

SEE with what magnificence and pomp of expression
he describes a Lyrick Poet, and the Muse's favourite.

*Quem tu, Melpomene semel
Nascentem placido lumine videris,
Illum non labor Isthmius
Clarabit pugilem, non equus impiger
Curru ducet Achaico
Victorem: neque res bellica Deliis
Ornatum foliis ducem,
Quod regum tumidas contuderit minas,
Ostendet Capitolio:
Sed, qua Tibur aqua fertile perfluunt,
Et spissa memorum coma
Fingent Æolio carmine nobilem.*

Lib. IV. Ode 3.

The youth whose kindly birth the kindly Muse
With an indulgent aspect views,
Shall neither at the barrier shine,
Nor the Olympic Garland win,
Nor drive the chariot o'er the plain,
Nor guide with skill the flowing rein;
No Laurel-leaves for battle won,
Shall the triumphant victor crown,
When to the Capitol he leads,
And on the necks of Monarchs treads:
But Tibur's streams and verdant glades,
The limpid spring and gloomy shades,
Shall fill his never-dying lays,
And crown him with immortal praise.

OLDSWORTH.

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HERE he has pointed out himself, and founds his merit on his imitating *Alcaeus*.

Pindar has been charged with want of correctness sometimes in his expressions, and being too extravagant in his metaphors, and too bold in his transitions: The character *HORACE* has given him seems to intimate this in some measure.

Monte decurrens velut amnis, imbres

Quem super notas aluere ripas,

Fervet, immensusque ruit profundo

Pindarus ore.

Lib. 4. Od. 2.

*Pindar's a mighty raging flood
That from some mountain flows,*

Rapid and warm, and deep and loud,

Whose force no limit knows, OLDSWORTH.

OUR Author, though sometimes he swells and rises high, never exceeds those bounds a clear judgment had set to a warm imagination; and his transitions, where boldest, will be found suitable to the main design, and to arise from the nature of this kind of Poetry, rather than from too great a loose given to his Muse. That in the third Ode of Book 3. is thought most liable to exception; which will soon vanish when you are acquainted with the design of the Ode, and on what occasion it was composed: There went a current report before *J. Caesar's* death, that he had entertained some thoughts of removing the seat of empire to *Troy*, from whence the *Romans* derived their original; and some persons imagined it might come into *Augustus's* head to execute what his Uncle and Father by adoption had intended. *HORACE* is thought to have composed this Ode to prevent it. *Juno* is introduced in the council of the Gods, consenting to favour the *Romans*, provided they never think of rebuilding *Troy*, or making that the seat of empire.

Sed bellicosæ fata Quiricibus

Hac lege dico, ne nimium pii,

Rebusque fidentes, avita

I 3

Teda

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*Tecta velint reparare Troja ;
Troja renascens alite lugubri
Fortuna tristi clade iterabitur,
Ducente viatrices catervas
Conjuge me Fovis, & sorore :
Ter se resurgat murus aeneus
Auctore Phœbo ; ter pereat meis
Excisus Argivis , ter uxor
Capta virum puerosque ploret.*

Lib. 3. Od. 3.

'Tis on these terms that Empire stands,
Should their ambitious forward race
With superstitious wicked hands
Rebuild that most detested place ;
Once more it should be sack'd, its children bleed,
Whilst I the wife of *Jove* my conqu'ring *Grecians* lead.

Should *Phœbus* with a brazen wall
Three times her haughty tow'rs surround,
Troy should three times unpitied fall
By *Grecian* arms, and kiss the ground :
Three times her matrons should lament the slain,
And thrice her captive sons endure the victor's chain.

OLDSWORTH.

Virgil after him has written to the same purpose in *Lib.*
12. where *Juno* at length yields to *Jupiter's* decrees ;
but on the following conditions.

*Neu Troas fieri jubeas, Teucrosque vocari,
Occidit, occideritque sinas cum nomine Troja.*

FROM the design thus known, it is easy to judge our
Post would take a proper opportunity to give this hint,
and not do it abruptly. This you see is likewise exe-
cuted in introducing *Juno* speaking in the council of the
Gods : But how to introduce her, there was the point ;
he does it thus : The *Ode* begins with the praises of a
just and courageous man ; he goes on to instance in some
Heroes, who by the exercise of virtue were deified : Here
is an occasion to speak of *Romulus*, who was worshipped
by

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by the Romans as a God, under the name of *Quirinus*. Upon his reception into Heaven, *Juno* takes upon her, as the known enemy of the *Trojans*, to tell the Gods (that might be supposed, according to the poetical system, to have assembled for this purpose) the conditions on which she consents to his being deified, and to the future grandeur of the *Roman* State. Thus what at first sight appeared to be a wild rapturous transition, is found upon examination to have proceeded from the highest good sense and discretion. As a Poet he prophetically delivers the divine decrees, and when it has served his purpose, as if the God that inspired his breast had left him, he thus checks the forward Muse.

*Quo musa tendis? desine pervicax
Referre sermones deorum.*

It will not be amiss to instance in some of the more remarkable beauties of his *Odes*. We will begin to shew the Sublime that reigns in some of them; of which sort are most of those made to compliment *Augustus*, who has had the finest praises given him ever any Prince had. The thought of making him to be *Mercury* come from Heaven to revenge *Caesar's* death, is of this kind.

*Sive mutata juvenem figura
Ales in terris imitatis, alma
Filius Maja, patiens vocari
Caesaris ultor.*

Lib. 1. Od. 2.

Or dost thou, gentle *Maja's* Son,
With ready help protect the good?
Hast thou dissembled youth put on,
Designing to purge the earth from *Caesar's* blood.

OLDSWORTH.

THAT *Ode* is no less so, where the Poet, as it were inspired, asks of the Muse what subject she can find worthy his Song. At last beginning with Heroes, he rises to *Jupiter*, with whom he joins *Augustus*, as his Vicegerent on earth.

I 4

Gentis

*Gentis humana pater atque custos,
Orte Saturno, tibi cura magni
Cæsaris Fatis data, tu secundo.*

Cæsare regnes. Lib. 1. Od. 12.

Lord of mankind! the world's wide sway,
And Cæsar's life are in thy pow'r;
The Fates could give no more,
O truly great, whom Cæsar must obey.

OLDSWORTH.

THE Romans having constantly supported their greatness, by a strict regard to Religion, he makes Cæsar's observation of it the conditions of his power.

*Ille seu Parthos Latio imminentes
Egerit iusto domitos triumpho,
Sive subiectos orientis oris
Seras & Indos.*

Te minor latum reget aquas orbem.

Ibid.

And whether he in triumph leads
The Parthians that on Latium press;
Or beats the Indians and the Medes,
And spoils the distant Nations of the East;
He, less than thou, rules all below. CREECH.

THE compliment paid to Augustus on the greatness of his power, that made the Parthians restore the Ensigns and prisoners, taken in Crassus's defeat, is of the same nature.

*Cælo tonantem credidimus Jovem
Regnare; præsens divus habebitur
Augustus, adjectis Britannis
Imperio gravibusque Persis.*

Lib. 3. Od. 5.

When Jove in thunder speaks his pow'r,
Though he's unseen, we know he reigns;

But

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But *Cæsar's* visible, whom all adore,
Since *Britain* feels his yoke, and *Persia* wears his chains.
OLDSWORTH.

THIS whole *Ode* is full of fine strokes and noble sentiments, and the transition to *Regulus's* speaking in the Senate against exchanging prisoners with the *Carthaginians*, is just and natural. The story is told in *Cæ. 2. Lib. 2. of Florus*. Having observed in the former part of the *Ode*, that the *Roman* soldiers that were taken by the *Parthians*, had contrary to their Country's honour, married with them; he shews how unworthy this was of a *Roman*, whom it rather became to dye with his sword in his hand, than yield to the enemy, from the example of *Regulus*. The generous and unconcerned behaviour of this great man, after he had forced the Senate to decree, that none of the prisoners should be redeemed, is nobly described in the following lines of the same *Ode*.

*Atqui sciebat, quæ sibi barbarus
Tortor pararet : non aliter tamen
Dimovit obstantes propinquos,
Et populum reditus morantem,
Quam si clientum longa negotia
Dijudicata lite relinqueret.
Tendens Venafranos in agros
Aut Lacedæmonium Tarentum.*

Too well he knew his savage foes
Their racks and tortures had prepar'd;
Yet still press'd on, and from their arms got loose,
Who with officious force the dreadful passage guard.
So calm and unconcern'd he went,
As if retiring from the bar;
With thronging clients cloy'd, with pleading spent,
To fair *Tarentum's* fields, to taste the country air.

OLDSWORTH.

WITH what strong and lively colours has he painted the People's love to that Prince, and their happiness under his auspicious government.

——— Desideriis iſta fidelibus
 Quarit patria Caſarem ;
 Tutus bos etenim rura perambulat,
 Nutrit rura Ceres, almaque fauſtitaſ ;
 Pacatum volitant per mare navitaſ ;
 Culpari metuit fides.
 Nullis polluitur caſta domus ſupris ;
 Mos & lex maculoſum edomuit neſas ;
 Laudantur ſimili prole puerpera ;
 Culpam pana premit comes.
 Condiſ quiſque diem collibus in ſuis,
 Et vitem viduas ducit ad arbores ;
 Hinc ad vina redit latus, & alteris
 Te menſis adhibet Deum.

Lib. 4. Od. 5.

His Rome her abſent Lord requires
 With eager, faithful, fond deſires.
 When Caſar's here, our flocks are ſafe,
 Our fields with plenty ſmile and laugh:
 No tempeſts in the ocean roar,
 No treachery infects the ſhore:
 No rapes invade the chaſte and good,
 Whiliſt vice by juſtice is ſubdued.
 Paternal virtues grace our ſons,
 And vengeance ev'ry crime atones:
 Each Roman ſwain ſecurely joins
 The widow'd elms, and curling vines;
 There drinks all day, with plenty bleſſ'd
 The Gods, and Caſar crown the feaſt.

OLDSWORTH.

OUR Author has the ſame dignity of thought, and rather greater majeſty of expreſſion, where he allegorically ſings the praiſes of his Prince. Thus under the Fable of the Titans warring with Jupiter, and their overthrow, the defeat of Brutus and Caſſius is veiled: Having deſcribed the vain attempts of the Giants, and all the Deities with Pallas or Wiſdom, at their head, engaged in Jupiter's defence; he makes this reflection, and in it gives Caſar's arms the higheſt commendation they could have.

Vis

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*Vis consilii expers mole ruit sua :
Vim temperatam dii quoque provehunt
In majus : Idem odere vires
Omne nefas animo moventes.*

Lib. 3. Od. 4.

The Gods are ever good and kind
To courage, when with conduct join'd :
But brutal force in a bad cause they hate,
And soon it sinks beneath its own unweildy weight.

OLDSWORTH.

HERE we have another instance of a bold transition, which yet will be found connected with the former part of the Ode, if strictly attended to. He had there recounted the favours he had received of the Muses, as we have already mentioned. Among others he would seem remotely to allude to *Augustus's* receiving him into favour, after he had taken arms against him under *Brutus* :

*Vos lene consilium & datis, & dato
Gaudetis alma.*

Ibid.

HENCE he takes the hint to bring in the ruin of that party, and *Augustus's* triumph.

IN another Ode he has taken a new way of praising *Augustus* ; for before he enters upon his encomium, he says *Phæbus* warned him for being so rash as to undertake to sing that Prince's Victories.

*Phæbus volentem prælia me loqui,
Victas & urbes, increpuit lyra :
Ne parva Tyrrhenum per aquor
Vela darem.*

Lib. 4. Od. 15.

THIS thought is the same with *Virgil's* in one of his Pastorals :

*Cum canerem reges & prælia, Cynthia aurem
Vellit, & admonuit, Pastorem, Tytore, pingues*

16

Pascere.

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Pascere oportet oves, deductum dicere carmen. Past. 6.

But when I try'd her tender voice too young,
And fighting Kings and bloody Battles sung;
Apollo check'd my pride, and bid me feed
My fat'ning flocks, nor dare beyond the Reed.

DRYDEN.

AFTER so modest an excuse, if he fell short of the dignity of his subject, HORACE makes the following Panegyrick on the Happiness of the times.

— *Tua, Caesar, atas,
Fruges & agris retulit uberes,
Et signa nostro restituit Jovi
Direpta Parthorum superbis
Possibus; & vacuum duellis
Fanum Quirini clausit: & ordinem
Rectum, & vaganti frena licentia
Injecit, amovitque culpas,
Et veteres revocavit artes:
Per quas Latinum nomen, & Itala
Crevere vires, famaue, & imperi
Porrecta Majestas ad ortum
Solis ab Hesperio cubili.
Custode rerum Casare, non furor
Civilis, aut vis exiget otium:
Non ira, qua procudit enses,
Et miseras inimicat urbes.*

Lib. 4. Od. 15.

— *Caesar, thy happy reign
Has brought fair plenty back again:
Once more the ensigns of the state adorn,
The sacred shrine of Jove from Parthian Temples torn.
Janus has shut his brazen portals close,
Whilst Justice triumphs o'er her guilty foes:
No crimes infest the age, but conscious vice
From the avenging Goddess flies;
Whilst all the arts revive,
And to the state new vigour give,*

These

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These did the *Latian* name and praise convey
 From bright *Aurora's*, down to the last stage of day.
 Whilst *Cæsar* is the Lord of human race,
 No broils shall interrupt our Halcyon days;
 No civil strife the hostile sword unsheath,
 Or shed abroad her pois'nous breath OLD SWORTH.

THE two last lines in the *Latin* are very sublimely expressed, and very much in the noble style of Scripture.

OUR Author has attained the art of doing what he looked upon to be so difficult, of speaking upon common subjects in an extraordinary manner.

Difficile est proprie communia dicere. Ars Poët. lib. 6.

THIS I take to be one part of the *Curiosa Felicitas* that *Petronius* admired in our Author. For example, speaking of the unconstancy of Fortune, a subject so commonly handled by Writers of all kinds; he in one of his *Odes* thus finely expresses himself upon it, advising *Mecenas* to enjoy the present time.

———— *Quod adest, memento
 Componere equus. Cætera fluminis
 Ritu feruntur, nunc medio alveo
 Cum pace delabentis Etruscum
 In mare, nunc lapides adesos,
 Stirpesque raptas, & pecus & domos,
 Volventis unâ, non sine montium
 Clamore, vicinaque silvæ;
 Cum fera diluvies quietos
 Irritat amnes. Ille potens sui,
 Latusque deget, cui licet, in diem,
 Dixisse, vixi: Cras vel atra
 Nube polum, pater, occupato,
 Vel sole puro: Non tamen irritum,
 Quodcunque retro est, efficiet, neque
 Dissinger, infectumque reddet,
 Quod fugiens semel hora vexit;
 Fortuna sævo lata negotio, &*

Ludum

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*Ludum insolentem ludere pertinax,
Transmutat incertos honores,
Nunc mihi, nunc alii benigna.
Laudo manentem : si celeres quatit
Pennas, resigno quæ dedit, & mea
Virtute me involvo, probamque
Pauperiem sine dote pero.*

Lib. 3. Od. 29.

All worldly things like waters flow,
Sometimes too high, sometimes too low,
Sometimes the even current glides
Down to the deep, and oft with mighty roar
Bears rocks upon its swelling tides,
Sweeps herds and houses from the shore,
And trunks of trees; the rivers quit their bounds,
Whilst every lofty hill and neighbouring wood resounds.

Happy the mortal who can say,
'Tis well, for I have liv'd to day;
To morrow let black clouds and storms arise,
Or let the Sun exert his beamy pow'r;
Nothing can interrupt my bliss,
I seiz'd and have enjoy'd my hour:
The Gods themselves, howe'er they smile or frown,
Cannot recall what's past, for that is all my own.

Fortune, the wanton fickle dame,
Plays on, and cheats us in the game;
Now gives, and the next moment takes away,
From me to you transfers th' uncertain crown:
I court her when dispos'd to stay;
But if she threatens to be gone,
Thus with a breath I toss her to the wind,
And still in Virtue's arms a kindly shelter find.

OLDSWORTH.

I SHALL give another instance of his talent therein, from his uncommon way of treating the topick of the necessity of death. The expressions here used are as noble as the thoughts are unusual on this head.

*Intactis opulentior
Thesauris Arabum, & divitis India,
Cementis licet occupes
Tyrrenum omne tuis, & mare Apulicum,
Si figit adamantinos
Summis verticibus dira necessitas
Clavos; non animum metu,
Non mortis laqueis expedies caput.* Od. 24. Lib. 3.

Though you could boast the yellow stores
That deck *Arabia's* happy shores,
Or all the wealth the *Indies* yield,
Or such amazing structures build,
As might with equal grandeur grace
The *Tuscan* and *Apulian* seas;
Yet when relentless Fate commands,
And reaches out her iron hands,
You must submit; for who can save
His life from sorrow and the grave?
OLDSWORTH.

FROM hence the Poet goes on to compare the simplicity of life and manners of the antient *Scythians* with that of the rich *Miser*, and finds it the more reasonable of the two. Here he seems to have found another opportunity of applauding his Prince, which he does in an uncommon manner, by expressing his earnest desire to see that effected for the good regulation of the Commonwealth, which he elsewhere observes was already brought about.

*O quisquis volet impias
Cades, aut rabiem tollere civicam,
Si quæret pater urbium
Subscribi statuis; indomitam audeat
Refranare licentiam
Clarus progenitis : —————* Ibid.

Where shall we find the gen'rous man,
Who can our civil feuds restrain,

Or

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Or purge a guilty age from vice?
A statue to his name shall rise;
Him late succeeding ages shall
The Father of his Country call. OLDSWORTH.

FROM what has been quoted, we may observe in this Writer a fine turn of expression almost peculiar to himself; and very good judges have not scrupled to tell us, that *Virgil* does not come up to him in this respect; and we must take notice particularly of that beauty in his Style, which he himself in his *Art of Poetry* has pronounced to be a very great one.

*Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum.*— Ars Poet. lin. 47.

AND this seems to be the other part of his *Curiosa Felicitas*. These are the two characteristicks of this Writer's Style, and these make him so very difficult to be translated above any other Writer; for I believe every one will readily grant, that none has had less justice done him that way than he, nor been oftener attempted; and what is at first sight unlikely, some of his lesser Odes, I mean those that treat of humbler subjects, have been found the most difficult: Witness *Scaliger's* favourite *Ode*, the 9th of *Lib. 3*. They that will be at the pains to observe it, will find the peculiar merit of that *Ode* to consist in the delicacy, brevity, and simplicity of the expressions, the beautiful order of the words, and harmonious sweetness of the numbers. This little *Ode*, though of all others perhaps the most laboured at, and ofteneft translated, has been the worst done. 'Tis this charming and unaffected brevity the *French* have endeavoured to imitate in their Sonnet; 'tis that perfection of Style *La Bruyere* admires, the art of finding out on every occasion that one proper expression which alone is the right.

SEVERAL of the *Odes* were possibly so in the proper sense of the words, that is, Songs and Hymns composed on certain occasions, and some of them for solemn festivals, to be sung by young men and virgins, that were chosen as the fittest persons, for the purity of their lives,

to perform this part of divine service. Of this sort, were the 21st of *Lib. 1.* the 6th of *Lib. 4.* and that which is distinguished by the Name of the *Carmen Saculare*. There were many other of his Odes that were sung by particular persons; and we find the Poet in the 11th of *Lib. 4.* advising *Phyllis*, his last mistress, to learn some of his Odes,

— *Age jam meorum
Finis amorum.*

*Non enim posthac alia calebo
Fœmina, condisce modos, amanda
Voce quos reddas: minuentur atra
Carmine cura.*

HERE the Translation does not give the same sense that I have taken it in, and therefore I have omitted it.

SOME indeed are of opinion, that there is but one that may properly be called *Carmen Saculare*; whereas others again contend, that the two former were not indeed sung at the *Ludi Saculares*, but at the *Ludi Apollinares*; which seems the more likely, for what is objected to the 6th of *Lib. 4.* that it has a part that is addressed to the young men and virgins that were to sing the Hymn is not sufficient, because this is only added to the end of the Hymn, as an exhortation to them: They were to be persons of the first quality, whose parents were to be living, else they were incapable of performing this service. The reason of this latter observation was, because all those that died, were supposed by the Antients to have been slain by *Apollo's*, or *Diana's* arrows; the former he has told us of in the latter part of the Ode. And farther, that it was thought a good omen of their future happiness in marriage to such young ladies as were pitched upon for this service.

*Virginum prima, puerique claris.
Patribus orti,*

Delia

*Delia tutela dea, fugaces
 Lynceas, & cervos cohibentis arcu,
 Lesbiam servare pedem, meique
 Pollicis ictum:*

*Rite Latona puerum canentes,
 Rite crescentem face noctilucam,
 Prosperam frugum celeremque pronos
 Volvere menses.*

*Nupta jam dices: ego diis amicum,
 Saculo festas referente luces,
 Reddidi carmen, docilis modorum
 Vatis Horatii. Ode 6. Lib. 4.*

The Nymphs and Youths from Nobles sprung,
 With rapture listen to my Song.
 Them chaste *Diana* guards and loves
 More than the Bow, the chace, and groves;
 And they shall favour and admire
 My suppliant strains, and tuneful lyre.
 They shall extol *Latona's* son,
 And praise the bright increasing Moon;
 By whom the months their courses steer,
 And fruits adorn the smiling year.
 The young imperial bride shall say,
 I sang a solemn Ode to day,
 By *HORACE* made, a famous Bard:
 My Song the Gods with pleasure heard.

OLDSWORTH.

WE have given an example or two of our Author's happiness in treating common topics. Let us see whether he has not succeeded as well in those descriptions so common to Poets, of the Spring, Winter, &c. Observe how the words are chosen in this of the Spring, addressed to *Virgil*, and judge if *HORACE* did not understand the taste of those he wrote to.

*Jam veris comites, quæ mare temperant,
Impellunt anima lintea thræcia :
Jam nec prata rigent, nec fluvii strepunt
Hyberna nive turgidi.*

*Nidum ponit, Ityn flebiliter gemens,
Infelix avis, & Cecropia domus
Æternum opprobrium, quod male barbaras
Regum est ultra libidines.*

*Dicunt in tenero gramine pinguium
Custodes ovium carmina fistula:
Delectantque deum, cui pecus & nigri
Colles Arcadia placent.*

Od. 12. Lib. 4.

*Zephyr, companion of the Spring,
Now smooths the seas, and swells the sail;
As o'er the meads he spreads his wing,
The snows dissolve at ev'ry gale,*

*Progne, a poor unhappy name,
Begins to build her nest, and sing.
How she reveng'd a guilty flame,
And punish'd an incestuous King.*

*Their tender flocks the shepherds keep,
And tune the pipe to rural strains,
They sing the God who guards their sheep;
The God who o'er Arcadia reigns. OLDSWORTH.*

THE Winter is described thus, in another Ode :

*Vides ut alta stet nive candidum
Soraete, nec jam sustineant onus ;
Silva laborantes, geluque
Flumina constiterint acuto ?*

See how Soraete's mountain scarce sustains
Her hoary load! what frosts congeal the woods

Bind.

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Bind fast the waving seas in icy chains,
And stop the rapid current of the floods!

Od. 9. Lib. 1.

THIS Ode is all written in the spirit of *Anacreon*, except the following lines, which are very sublime.

*Permitte divi cætera : qui simul
Stravere ventos æquore fervido
Depræliantes, nec cupressi,
Nec veteres agitantur orni.*

Ibid.

Leave all the rest to *Jove*, at whose command
The warring winds their rough contentions end:
No more the waves in curling ridges stand,
Nor *Ash* nor *Cypress* to the tempest bend.

OLDSWORTH.

THESE lines are as lofty as *Pindar's* Muse could reach, and the following have all the softness and delicacy of *Anacreon*.

*Quid sit futurum cras, fuge querere, &
Quem fors dierum cunque dabit, lucro
Appone : nec dulces amores
Sperne puer, neque tu choreas ;*

*Donec virenti canities abest
Morosa, nunc & campus & area,
Lenesque sub noctem susurri
Composita repetantur hora ;*

*Nunc & latentis proditor intimo
Gratus puellæ risus ab angulo
Pignusque direptum lacertis,
Aut digito male pertinaci.*

Ibid.

Nought future, no to-morrows thee employ,
The present hour is thine, and this improve ;
Now in thy youth the gift of heav'n enjoy
In sportive dance, in revels, and in love.

Remove

Remove far off old age, and late decay,
 Now to the walks and to the ring repair;
 At night the lucky moment calls away,
 The gentle whisper, and the yielding fair:
 In vain she flies to hide, but laughing shows
 How you may find her out, and hold her fast;
 And when you snatch some favour, claps it close,
 Struggles a while, but lets it go at last.

OLDSWORTH.

FORTUNE and her attendants are finely described in the following lines.

*Te semper anteit sava necessitas,
 Clavos trabales & cuneos manu
 Gestans athena: nec severus
 Uncus abest, liquidumque plumbum.
 Te spes & albo rara fides colit
 Velata panno, nec comitem abnegat. Lib. i. Od. 5.*

Where-e'er thou lead'st thy awful train,
 Necessity still stalks before,
 Whose brazen hands the hook and nails retain,
 The plummet and the wedge, the emblems of her
 Fidelity in white array, [pow'r.
 And eager Hope still guard thy way.

OLDSWORTH.

WRITING to *Galatea* to dissuade her from going to sea, after having described some of the dangers that threaten one in such a voyage, he bids her not trust to the fair appearance of a calm and a smooth sea, lest she share *Europa's* danger, and wish she had never exposed herself to so treacherous an element.

THUS he takes occasion to give you a very agreeable relation of the adventure of *Jupiter's* carrying *Europa* away to *Crete*, and her distress upon arriving there. Her surprize is very naturally expressed as follows.

*Unde? quo veni? levis una mors est
 Virginum culpa. Vigilansne ploro*

Turpe

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*Turpe commissum? an vitiis carentem
Ludit imago*

*Vana, qua porta fugiens eburna
Somnium ducit?*

Lib. 3. Od. 27.

Where am I? wretched and undone!
And can a single death atone
The loss of honour and of shame?
Or am I pure, and this a dream?

OLDSWORTH,

HERE one cannot but observe how artfully the connection is made between this fine transition and the former part of the Ode.

IN the little Ode preceeding this, there is a great deal of amorous gayety: The Poet pretends he has lived long enough in Love's service, and now desires to be honourably dismissed. He has no sooner said so, but he invokes *Venus* to punish *Chloe's* cruelty to him, and touch the haughty fair one's heart.

*O, qua beatam Diva tenes Cyprum,
Regina, sublimi flagello*

Tange Chloen semel arrogantem. Lib. 3. Od. 26.

IN the Ode where he invites *Mecenas* to partake of a frugal entertainment he had prepared for him, besides what has been already taken notice of, he has this elegant and agreeable description of the Summer's heat.

*Jam clarus occultum Andromedes pater
Ostendit ignem; jam Procyon furit,*

*Et stella vesani Leonis,
Sole dies referente siccos.*

*Jam pastor umbras cum grege languido
Rivumque fessus quarit, & horridi*

*Dumeta silvani; caretque
Ripa vagis taciturna ventis.*

Lib. 3. Od. 29.

Already *Cepheus* mounts the sky,
And scorching *Procyon* rages high;

Mad

Mad *Leo* sheds around his pointed fire,
 And beamy *Phœbus* fires the burning plains;
 The flocks to shades and streams retire;
 The flocks and herds and sweating swains
 All follow great *Silvanus* to the groves,
 Whilst not a breeze of air the quiv'ring branches moves.
 OLD SWORTH.

HIS description of the Fortunate Islands is extremely fine, and can only be equalled by *Virgil's* admirable description of *Italy*, in the second *Georgick*.

*Reddit ubi Cererem tellus inarata quotannis,
 Et imputata flores usque vinea:
 Germinat & nunquam fallentis termes oliva,
 Suamque pulla ficus ornat arborem:
 Mella cava manant ex ilice; montibus altis
 Levis crepante lympa desilit pede:
 Illic injussa veniunt ad mulctra capella,
 Refertque tenta grex amicus ubera.* Epod. 16.

Where fields untill'd the harvest bear,
 And *Ceres* blesses ev'ry year:
 Where figs and olive trees impart
 Rich plenty without care or art;
 Where honey trickles from the oak,
 And limpid waters from the rock;
 The ewes and she-goats never fail,
 But come full laden to the pail. OLD SWORTH.

I SHALL subjoin part of *Virgil's* description of *Italy*, that the reader may compare them together, and see how nearly they have both hit upon the same manner, in describing a fertile and pleasant country.

*Sed gravida fruges & Bacchi massicus humor
 Implevere: Tenent oleaque armentaque lata
 Hic ver assiduum, atque alienis mensibus æstas
 Bis gravida pecudes, bis pomis utilis arbor.*

Georg. Lib. 2.

But

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But fruitful vines, and the fat olive freight,
And harvests heavy with their fruitful weight,
Adorn our fields; and on the chearful green
The grazing flocks and lowing herds are seen.
Perpetual spring our happy climate sees,
Twice breed the cattle, and twice bear the trees.
DRYDEN.

THE description of Care in *Book 2. Ode 16.* is noble
and just.

*Scandit aratas vitiosa naves
Cura, nec turma equitum relinquit,
Ocius cervis, & agente nimbos
Ocius euro.*

Nor martial Troops, nor Ships of war
Can ever leave black care behind:
That still pursues them in the rear,
Outstrips the stag, out-flies the wind.

OLDSWORTH.

IN another place he has described what men undergo
to shun poverty, with all the indignation to be found in
Juvenal; which by the way may furnish us with this
observation, that it was our Poets intent and choice to
adapt the style of his Satires to their subject, which was
low too.

*Magnum pauperies opprobrium, jubet
Quidvis & facere & pati,
Virtutisque viam deserit ardua.
Vel nos in Capitolium,
Quo clamor vocat & turba faventium:
Vel nos in mare proximum
Gemmas, & lapides, aurum & inutile,
Summi materiam mali,
Mittamus. ———*

Lib. 3. Od. 24.

Want

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Want is the worst disgrace we fear ;
Hence we submit to grief and care,
With vigour act, with patience bear.
When the blind God is all our guide,
From Virtue's path' we tread aside.
Then to the Capitol let's bring
(Where crowds attend and clamours ring,
Our wealth, whence all our troubles spring.
Or let the sea's deep womb devour
Our sparkling gems and useless oar.

OLDSWORTH.

SOMETHING Lower, in pursuit of the same subject,
he shews that the root of the great corruption of man-
ners in his time, lay in the ill education of their youth.

— *Nescit equo rudis*
Harere ingenuus puer ;
Venarique timet ; ludere doctior
Seu Graco jubeas trocho,
Seu malis vetita legibus alea :
Cum perjura patris fides
Consortem socium fallat, & hospitem,
Indignoque pecuniam
Heredi properet.

Lib. 3. Od. 24.

The dread of want, and love of gain,
Inure mankind to toil and pain.
The youth by soft indulgence bred,
Who cannot fit the manag'd steed,
Avoids the barrier and the race,
And shuns the fields and active chace ;
But plays at Tennis or at Dice,
And all the penal laws defies.
The Father saves for him to spend,
And cheats his partner or his friend ;
Can break a promise, or forswear
A contract to enrich his heir.

OLDSWORTH.

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BUT in the following lines, which in a very lively manner paint the degeneracy of the age, the Poet has employed the keenest satire.

*Fœcunda culpa secula nuptias
Primum inquinavere, & genus, & domos ;
Hoc fonte derivata clades
In patriam populumque fluxit.
Motus doceri gaudet Ionicos
Matura virgo, & fingitur artubus
Fam nunc, & incestos amores
De tenero meditatur ungui :*

*Mox juniores querit adulteros
Inter mariti vina : neque eligit
Cui donet impermissa raptim
Gaudia, luminibus remotis :
Sed jussa coram, non sine conscio
Surgit marito ; seu vocat insitor,
Seu navis Hispana magister,
Dedecorum preciosus emptor.*

Od. 6. Lib. 3.

When like a deluge vice triumphant reign'd,
And a degen'rate race the marriage rites prophan'd.

Hence the contagion first began,
And reach'd our blood, and stain'd our race ;
The blooming virgin ripe for man
A thousand wanton airs displays :
Train'd to the dance her well-taught limbs she moves,
And fates her wishing soul with loose incestuous loves.

The bride her lustful Rake invites
Before her husband's face to toy ;
She stays not for his drunken fits,
Nor in a corner tastes the joy.
But in her cuckold's presence sells her charms,
And grasps the merchant's gold, or meets the captain's
arms.

OLDSWORTH.

HIS

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HIS comparisons are like his descriptions, admirable, but peculiarly adapted to the subject : when he will praise young *Drusus*, he compares him to the eagle, in the following sublime manner.

*Qualem ministrum fulminis alitem,
(Cui rex deorum regnum in aves vagas
Permisit, expertus fidelem
Jupiter in Ganymede flavo)
Olim Juventas & patrius vigor
Nido laborum pepulit inscium.*

*Vernique jam nimbis remotis,
Insolitos docuere nifus,
Venti parentem ; mox in ovilia
Demisit hostem vividus impetus ;
Nunc in reluctantes dracones*

Egit amor dapis atque pugna. Lib. 4. Od. 4.

The royal bird, to whom the King of Heav'n
The empire of the feather'd race has giv'n,
For services already done
The Rape of *Priam's* son,
With high paternal virtues fill'd,
Tho' young and from the nest unskill'd ;

His first attempts with trembling pinions tries,
Then down the sweeping wind with rapid force he flies,
And 'midst the frighted lambkins bears away,
With mighty force, his trembling prey ;
Or dips his beak in serpent's blood,
Eager of battle and of food. OLDSWORTH.

BUT the coy *Chloe* is compared to a tender Fawn, with all the little circumstances that discover the virtuous virgin's shyness and modesty.

*Vitas hinnuleo me similis, Chloe,
Quarenti pavidam montibus avia
Matrem, non sine vano
Aurarum & filia metu,*

K 2

Nam,

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*Nam, seu mobilibus vepres inhorruit
Adventum foliis, seu virides rubrum
Dimovere lacerta,*

Et corde & genibus tremit. Lib. 1. Od. 23.

You shun me, *Chloe*, as a Fawn
To seek her dam affrighted flies,
Through ev'ry mountain, wood, and lawn,
And trembles at each rushing breeze.

Her breath alternate comes and goes,
If but a lizard stir the leaves;
And if the Zephyrs fan the boughs,
She starts and quivers, pants and heaves.

OLDSWORTH.

It were endless to attempt to expose to the Reader's view, the numberless beauties that occur in HORACE'S Odes, or to give them their just praise. If what has been here done may any ways contribute to make the less intelligent Reader better acquainted with the genius of this admirable Writer, it is as much as can be expected or desired. The more learned will on this account excuse it, and be content to look a little more distinctly upon some of those fine passages they so much admired before.

WE are now to examine into HORACE'S other Works, his Satires and Epistles, which are partly critical, and partly satirical; especially Book 2. of the Epistles, is almost wholly critical, not to mention his *Art of Poetry*, which is written in the Epistolary Style. HORACE'S temper was certainly pretty inclinable to Satire, but rather to genteel raillery, than sharp reproaches: And being a courtier himself, and a little loose in his morals, I mean the practice, it was an argument of discretion in him, to indulge his vein, rather in discrediting and exposing the follies and absurdities of the age, than scourging its vices, which were certainly great and numerous enough; though men had not yet triumphed in such open and monstrous enormities, as must dishonour any other reign but that of *Nero* and *Domitian*.

YET

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YET in his time men were divided in their judgement about this matter, some blaming him as too severe, whilst others thought him weak and trifling.

*Sunt quibus in satira videtur nimis acer, & ultra
Legem tendere opus; sine nervis altera, quicquid
Composui, pars esse putat. ———* Lib. 1. Sat. 1.

Some fancy I am bitter when I jeer,
Beyond the rules of Satire too severe;
Some that my verse is dull and flat, and say
A man may write a thousand such a day. CREECH.

It will perhaps be expected, that something of the nature of this kind of Poetry be premised, before we proceed any farther.

SATIRE is a kind of Poetry unknown to the Greeks, unless you will say it something resembles the liberty of speaking used in old Comedy, where men's vices were freely exposed. This HORACE has expressly told us in the beginning of Sat. 4. Lib. 1.

*Eupolis, atque Cratinus, Aristophanesque poeta,
Atque alii quorum Comœdia prisca virorum est,
Si quis erat dignus describi, quod malus, aut fur,
Quod mœchus foret, aut sicarius, aut alioqui
Famosus; multa cum libertate notabant.
Hinc omnis pendet Lucilius, hosce secutus,
Mutatis tantum pedibus numerisque. ———*

Cratin and Eupolis, that lash'd the age,
Those old comedian Furies of the stage;
If they were to describe a vile, unjust,
And cheating knave, or scourge a lawless lust,
Or other crimes; regardless of his fame,
They shew'd the man, and boldly told his name.
This is Lucilius' way, he follows those,
His wit the same, but other numbers chose.

CREECH

THE form of it is entirely *Roman*, and owed its regulation and improvement to *Lucilius*, but was perfected by *HORACE*, *Persius*, and *Juvenal*. *Dacier* has given the world a very learned dissertation of the origin and progress of Satire among the *Romans*; and Mr. *Dryden's* Preface to his translation of *Juvenal* having done the same, the Reader that would be more informed about it, may consult them at his leisure, or see the life of *Juvenal* in the second Volume.

THE learned world have been divided in their opinion which should have the preference, *HORACE* or *Juvenal*. This, like other disputes, has been sometimes carried on with more warmth than discretion; and many have been for giving a determination in general, that depended upon the consideration of several particulars. To state the case fairly, it is not enough to enquire which is the most entertaining or instructive temper of the Writers; the times they lived in, and the Vices or follies they exposed, is likewise to be looked into. As to which is most entertaining, it will be difficult to determine: the grave and serious, will like the solemn indignation of *Juvenal*; and the gay and courtly, the witty smiles of *HORACE*; though perhaps *HORACE* never rises to *Juvenal's* sublimity, who often hits upon the other's pleasantry and humour. The former is constantly diverting you, the latter strikes more home, and makes more lively impressions on your mind. Nor is it easier to say which is most instructive; *HORACE* ranges through a field, *Juvenal* considers one point more narrowly: The first insinuates all the necessary instructions for the conduct of life; the latter strongly enforces the observation of some great duty, and paints all the pleasure of complying with it, and the shame of neglecting it, in the strongest colours. One advises like a friend, the other commands as a master. Upon the whole it may be said, that *Juvenal* is most entertaining, because more eloquent, more moving, and more sublime; and *HORACE* more instructive, because he is more universal, more acquainted with the world, and his precepts more accommodated to the various stages of life.

As to the temper of the Writers, they seem to be as different as their Writings. HORACE was during a great part of his life a man of wit and pleasure, and wanted none of the Accomplishments that go to the making of what the world calls a fine gentleman. *Juvenal* was a man of strict integrity and virtue, and therefore never spared vice when it came in his way ; as not being afraid to be severe with a good conscience: whilst the other durst not reprove that in others he was but too guilty of himself. The age they lived in best united with their temper : No enormous vices were seen at *Augustus's* Court ; but there were a thousand abuses of a lesser nature, and many failures in point of discretion and decency to be reformed, and the general taste of the people to be refined and improved : This task suited HORACE exactly. *Domitian's* Court was a continued scene of impurity, luxury, and cruelty ; the Prince's vile example bore down all before it, and that became a man's merit, and the way to preferment, which should have been his shame and the occasion of his punishment. *Juvenal* had a virtue steady enough to engage these monsters, and a genius able to describe and expose them as they deserved, and a spirit that animated his verse with an indignation strong enough, if any thing could, to fill their breasts with horror and remorse. Indeed he is himself what he has described *Lucilius* to have been.

*Ense velut stricto, quoties Lucilius ardens
Infremuit, rubet auditor cui frigida mens est
Criminibus, tacita sudant praeordia culpa.* Juv. Sat. i.

But when *Lucilius* brandishes his pen,
And flashes in the face of guilty men,
A cold sweat stands in drops on ev'ry part,
And rage succeeds to tears, revenge to smart.

DRYDEN.

HORACE on the other hand declines this severity, and mildly reproofing what seems amiss, penetrates to the bottom of men's actions, discovers the little crafty turns and shifts of vice, and the weakness and folly of human nature ;

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nature; he gilds the pill, and smiles while he searches your wound, and is, in a word, what *Persius* has described him to be;

*Omne vaser vitium ridenti Flaccus amico
Tangit, & admissus circum praeordia ludis,
Callidus excusso populum suspendere naso.* *Pers. Sat. 1.*

He with a sly insinuating grace
Laugh'd at his friend, and look'd him in the face;
Would raise a blush where secret vice he found,
And tickle while he gently prob'd the wound;
With seeming innocence the crowd beguil'd,
And made the desp'rate passies when he smil'd.

DRYDEN.

As to *Persius*, I think, notwithstanding *Casaubon's* learned endeavours, the comparison seems not upon such equal terms. His Style indeed is nobler than *HORACE's*, and his method more regular; for whereas *HORACE* is continually running from one subject to another, he keeps continually close to one: But, however ~~he~~ strove to imitate *HORACE* in his wit, he could never reach him, being never more dull than when he aims at a jest. In excuse for our Poet's mixing several subjects in the same Satire, it may be said, that it has rendered him the more instructive, and seems to have been the nature of this kind of writing; and though *Juvenal* has in this matter outdone *HORACE*, he seems to favour his practice in these lines;

*Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
Gaudia, discursus, nostri est farrago libelli.* *Sat. 1.*

The word *farrago*, very plainly answering to *satira*, or *satura*, which implies a mixture, or medley of things.

Persius's spleen which reigns in his writings, does not seem so effectually to move the Reader, as *HORACE's* wit, or *Juvenal's* eloquence. His Philosophy is excellent, but too sour to please; and the circumstances of the times he wrote in were such, as to make it necessary very often

to

to veil his meaning, and mask his words. He is allowed to write like a Gentleman, as he was, but we are not obliged to own HORACE unpolite and vulgar; what absurdity would it be for him to be guilty of this fault, that has not spared so fine a Wit as *Plautus*, for falling into it sometimes? I must beg leave to except the seventh of Lib. I. about *Rupilius* and *Persius*. Were all his Satires of this strain, the Poet would have certainly forfeited by writing them all the reputation he had gained by his *Odes*. But this seems to have been a very juvenile work, and therefore excusable.

HORACE has peculiarly adapted the Style of his verse to the design of his work. He himself calls them *Sermoni Propiora*, near a-kin to prose. This liberty enabled him to pursue his subject more closely, and reason without declaiming; and without appealing to the passions, he thought the best way to master them, was by convincing the understanding. He had ransacked the Schools of the Philosophers, and extracted from them all a set of admirable principles for the direction of human life. He was for having men live up to the rules of nature as much as they were able, which was only to be acquired by divesting themselves of a blind submission to their immoderate desires, and irregular appetites, endeavouring to make themselves easy under every circumstance of life. He strongly insisted on a mutual forbearance among friends with each other's failings, and a candid interpretation of what should happen to be done amiss. His advice, as to the discretionary part of our behaviour to superiors, does not fall short of the moral part; nothing can be more judicious than what he counsels on this head. The characters he draws are various, strongly painted; and very natural; and precept and example are in all the Satires so happily blended together, that the one constantly serves to illustrate the other: For having observed happiness to be the ultimate end of our actions, he most ingeniously rallies the several false steps made to attain it, and frequently proposes such rational methods, as, if well attended to, are what might not a little contribute towards it.

IN *Sat. 1. Lib. I.* he has very ingeniously rallied the uneasy temper of mankind; that is never satisfied in any con-

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dition of life. The great reason he brings for it at last, is, that men still are eager to press forwards, that they may overtake those they see are got before them. On which occasion, he concludes with the following fine reflection.

*Inde fit, ut raro, qui se vixisse beatum
Dicat, & exacto contentus tempore, vita
Cedat, uti conviva satur, reperire queamus.* Sat. 1. Lib. I.

Hence 'tis scarce any thinks his state is blest,
Nor when death calls, like a contented guest,
Will rise from life, and lay him down to rest. *Creech.* }

IN Sat. 3. Lib. I. he is thought to have given *Virgil's* character, speaking of the unreasonableness of not bearing with the failures of one's friend.

*Iracundior est paulo, minus aptus acutis
Naribus horum hominum, rideri possit eo, quod
Rusticius tonso toga defluit, & male laxus
In pede calceneus haret; at est bonus, ut melior vir
Non alius quisquam; at tibi amicus; at ingenium ingens
Inculto latet hoc sub corpore.* ——— Sat. 3. Lib. I.

Perhaps he's pettish, and he's apt to rage,
He cannot bear the raillery of the age;
Perhaps he does not wear his clothes genteel,
His shoe is not well made, nor sits it well:
He may be flouted and be jeer'd for this,
Yet he's an honest man as any is:
He is thy friend, and tho' the Case be foul,
It holds a learned and a noble Soul. *CREECH.*

HE afterwards pursues the former subject, and would have a man be a little blind to his friend's imperfections; as a lover is to those of his mistress, or a fond father to those of his child.

*Vellem in amicitia sic erraremus & isti
Errori nomen virtus posuisset honestum.*

I wish

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I wish this error in our friendship reign'd,
Or had the credit of a virtue gain'd. CREECH.

ONE of our Author's beauties in his Satires, is his address in exposing some vitious character, when he is upon something else, and seems not to design it. There is a fine instance of this, where speaking about Comedy, that it sometimes rises, as when an old man storms at his son for his open and scandalous debaucheries, he artfully and most satirically subjoins,

————— *Nunquid Pomponius istis
Audiret leviora, pater si viveret ?* Sat. 4. Lib. I.

And wou'd not Pompon from his father fear,
Were he alive, a rattle as severe? CREECH.

IN the same Satire he has justly reprov'd a certain baseness of temper, too commonly observable in the world, where a man shall pretend a great value for another, and seem concerned you should say any ill of him, and after all this, make a more cruel reflection upon his conduct, than what you had said before.

————— *Mentio si qua
De Capitolini furtis injecta Petili
Te coram fuerit, defendas ut tuus est mos,
Me Capitolinus convictore usus amicoque
A puero est, causaque mea permulta rogatus
Fecit, & incolumis, lator, quod vivit in urbe :
Sed tamen admiror, quo pacto judicium illud
Fugerit. Hic nigra succus loliginis, hac est
Ærugo mera* —————

If we discourse how Petil stole the crown ;
And you, as you are wont, his cause defend,
He has a kindness for me, he's my friend,
My old acquaintance he, he is indeed,
And saith I'm glad at heart that he is freed ;
And yet I wonder how he escap'd his right ;
This, this is base detraction, this is spight. CREECH.

THE variety of human folly, according to the Stoical paradox, that all Men are mad, is pleasantly described in *Sat. 3. Lib. 2.*

————— *Velut silvis, ubi passim*
Palantes error certo de tramite pellit,
Ille sinistrorsum, hic dextrorsum abit: unus utrique
Error, sed variis illudit partibus; hoc te
Crede modo insanum, nihilo ut sapientior ille
Qui te derides caudam trahat.

As men that lose their way in woods, divide,
 Some go on this, and some on t'other side;
 The error is the same, all miss the road,
 Altho' in different quarters of the wood.
 Thus as they call thee, think that thou art mad;
 But those that call thee so, are quite as bad.

GREEK.

THE covetous old fellow is painted so humorously in the same Satire, that I think neither *Plautus* nor *Moliere's Miser* can equal it.

Pauper Optimus argenti positi intus & auri,
Qui Vejentanum festis potare diebus
Campana solitus trulla, vappamque profestis;
Quondam lethargo grandi est oppressus, ut hares
Fam circum loculos, & claves, latus ovensque
Curreret: Hunc medicus multum celer atque fidelis
Excitat hoc pacto; mensam poni jubet, atque
Effundi saccos nummorum: accedere plures
Ad numerandum, hominem sic erigit: addit & illud:
Ni tua custodis, avidus jam hac auferet hares.
Men' vivo? Ut vivas igitur, vigila: hoc age. Quidvis?
Deficient inopem vena te, ni cibus atque
Ingens accedas stomacho futura ruenti.
Tu cessas? agedum: sume hoc ptisanarium oryza.
Quanti emptæ? Parvi. Quanti ergo? Octo assibus. Eheu!
Quid refert, morbo, an furtis, pereamne rapinis?

Optimus,

Opimius, that old cuss, and richly poor,
 Who wanted ev'n the wealth he had in store,
 That on feast-days did meanest wine provide
 In earthen jugs, and lees on all beside ;
 Lay in a lethargy, all hope was gone,
 And now his joyful heir ran up and down,
 And seiz'd the keys and chests as all his own.
 This the kind Doctor saw, and this design
 He us'd for cure ; he brought a table in,
 And ordered some to tumble o'er his coin :
 This rous'd him ; then he cries, Sir, you're undone.
 Wake, Sir, and watch, or else your money's gone ;
 Your heirs will seize it : What, while I'm alive ?
 Then wake and show it, Sir, come, come revive.
 What must I do ? Eat, Sir : What are you loth ?
 Pray, take this little dish of barley broth.
 What doth it cost ? Not much, upon my word.
 How much, pray ? Why, two groats : Two groats !
 Oh Lord !

'Tis the same thing to me to be undone
 By thieves, or physick ; Doctor, I'll have none.

CREECH.

HIS Epistles make another part of his satirical Writings, and differ from the Satires only in the style, which is more polished, and the manner of treating the subject, which is rather more genteel and agreeable. Advice intended for a particular person, requires more address to insinuate and make it acceptable, than is requisite in a general-discourse. In his first Epistle, Book I. he tells us, he search'd the writings, and examined the Principles of every Sect, to furnish himself with the necessary precepts for the good conduct of life, which he was very desirous to communicate to the world for the publick benefit, being uneasy 'till he had executed this his intention.

*Ut nox longa, quibus mentitur amica, diesque
 Longa videtur opus debentibus ; ut piger annus
 Pupillis, quos dura premit custodia matrum ;
 Sic mihi tarda fluunt, ingrataque tempora, qua spem*

Con-

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*Consiliumque morantur agendi gnariter id quod
Æque pauperibus prodest, locupletibus aque,
Æque neglectum pueris senibusque nocebit.*

As night to those their mistrefs fails appears,
As days to labourers, and as long the years,
When jealous mothers curb, to eager heirs;
So dull and so ingrate my time doth flow,
Which hinders what I hope and wish to do:
What done will profit rich and poor, what long
Forborn, prove equal harm to old and young.

CREECH.

IF this could not be effected, he must endeavour to regulate his own life.

Restat ut his ego me ipse regam, solerque elementis.

To encourage men to begin a reformation of their manners, he tells us, that though they cannot pretend to perfection, some progress may be made, which is still praise-worthy.

Est quodam prodire tenuis, si non datur ultra.

Ep. 1. Lib. 1.

What if a farther progress you despair,
'Tis somewhat, surely, to have gone thus far.

CREECH.

THAT there is no vice but what will admit of a cure, if we will have patience to submit and attend to it.

*Invidus, iracundus, iners, vinosus, amator,
Nemo adeo ferus est, ut non mitescere possit
Si modo cultura patientem commodet aurem.*

Ep. 1. Lib. 2.

The rash, the lazy lover, none's so wild
But may be tame, and may be wisely mild,

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If they consult true virtue's rule with care,
And lend to good advice a patient ear. CREECH.

THE first thing in setting out in the world, is a firm resolution of not parting with one's integrity.

—— *Hic murus aheneus esto,
Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa.* Ibid.

Be this thy guard, and this thy strong defence,
A virtuous heart, and unstain'd innocence :
Not to be conscious of a shameful sin,
Nor yet look pale for scarlet crimes within.
CREECH.

IF a man should be censured for thus separating himself from the way of the world, and forsaking their measures, he is to answer as the Fox did the sick Lion :

—— *Quia me vestigia terrent,
Omnia te adversum spectantia, nulla retrorsum.* Ibid.

—— I'm afraid,
Great King of beasts ; for all the treads I see
Are to thy den, none back, that frightens me.
CREECH.

IN the second Epistle, he shews us the true method of reading the Poets, in the manner that those great men themselves design'd we should.

*Trojani belli scriptorem, maxime Lolli,
Dum tu declamas Romæ, Præneste relegi ;
Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plinius ac melius Chrysippo & Crantore dixit.*
Ep: 2. Lib. 1.

While you to plead at Rome, my friend, remain,
I here have read my *Homer* o'er again ;
Who hath what's base, what decent, just and good,
Clearer than *Crantor*, or *Chrysippus*, shew'd. CREECH.
He

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HE has judiciously shewn in this Epistle, that all the comforts and conveniences of life are thrown away upon us, unless we regulate and prepare our minds for the due use and enjoyment of them.

——— *Valeat possessor oportet,
Si comportatis rebus bene cogitet uti.
Sincerus est nisi vas, quodcumque infundis accessit, Ibid.*

——— He must have health,
He must be well that would enjoy his wealth;
The musty vessels soure what they contain.

CREECH.

BUT a too fond pursuit of these comforts and conveniences, he has in another place shewn to be the reason why men are backward in searching after wisdom.

——— *Quod si
Frigida curarum fomenta relinquere posses,
Quo te cœlestis sapientia duceret, ires. Lib. 1. Ep. 3.*

If you could leave those cares that numb thy mind,
Shake off thy fears, and leave the clog behind;
Then you would live as wisdom's rules advise.

THE effects of wine are wittily described in the following lines.

*Quid non ebrietas designat? operta recludit:
Spes jubet esse ratas: in prœlia trudit inermem:
Sollicitis animis onus eximit; addocet artes.
Fœcundi calices quem non fecere disertum?
Contracta quem non in paupertate solutum?*
Lib. I. Ep. 5.

What wonders cannot wine effect! 'tis free
Of secrets, and turns hope to certainty;
It pushes on the unarm'd man to wars;
It frees the troubled mind from weighty cares;

It

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It teaches arts, it teaches how to think;
And what man is not eloquent in's drink;
And who, though cramp'd in narrow want, 's not free?

CREECH.

IN the following Epistle the Poet enquiring after happiness, lays it down as a first principle, that mankind should not fondly admire any thing.

*Nil admirare prope res est una, Numici,
Solaque, quæ possit facere & servare beatum:*

Lib. 1. Ep. 6.

To admire nothing (as most are wont to do)
It is the only method that I know
To make men happy, and to keep 'em so.

CREECH.

THE next is a most ingenious apology and vindication of his behaviour to *Mecenas*, which might have given offence to a less generous Patron. But HORACE with much art, but boldly, assures him throughout the whole Epistle, that he prefers his liberty and quiet to all the favours he can bestow upon him, and is ready to take the Weasel's advice to the Fox that could not get out of the hole he had crept into, because he was grown fatter.

Hæc ego si compellar imagine, cuncta resigno.

Lib. 1. Ep. 7.

Is this apply'd to me? I now restore
The gifts that came from you, and ask no more.

CREECH.

He thinks every man should decline all that stands between him and happiness, when he finds how light every thing is, that he can put in the balance against them.

*Qui simul aspexit, quantum dimissa petitis
Præstent, mature redeat, repetaturque relicta.*

Meciri se quemque suo modulo, ac pede, verum est. Ibid.

He

He that hath once perceiv'd the treach'rous bait,
 And how his first excells his present state;
 Let him return unto his former care,
 And follow what he left: 'Tis just and fair,
 By our own feet to measure what we are.

CREECH.

This is all the excuse for his seemingly odd way of thinking.

HE taxes the weakness of mankind that think they could live happier in one place than another, which altogether consists in a chearful and contented mind.

*Tu, quaecumque Deus tibi fortunaverit horam,
 Grata sume manu, nec dulcia differ in annum;
 Ut quocumque loco fueris, vixisse libenter
 Te dicas. Nam si ratio & prudentia curas
 Non locus effusi late maris arbiter, aufert;
 Caelum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt.
 Strenua nos exercet inertia, navibus atque
 Quadrigis petimus bene vivere, quod petis, hic est,
 Est Ulubris; animus si te non deficit equus.*

Lib. 1. Ep. 11.

Take thankfully those hours the Gods shall give;
 Use while you may, and be not slow to live:
 For if 'tis reason, and not change of air,
 That brings soft rest, and frees our souls from care;
 Those that beyond-sea go, shall sadly find,
 They change their climate only, not their mind.
 A busy idleness destroys our ease,
 We ride and sail to seek for happiness.
 Yet what we seek with ev'ry tide and wind,
 We can ev'n here, or at *Ulubra* find,
 If we can have but a contented mind. CREECH.

THE examining into the several ways of life that lead to happiness, he has reckoned another very essential point of our conduct.

*Inter cuncta leges, & percunctabere doctos,
Qua ratione queas traducere leniter ævum;
Ne te semper inops agitet vexetque cupido;
Ne pavor, & rerum mediocriter utilium spes:
Virtutem doctrina paret, naturam donet:
Quid minuat curas: Quid te tibi reddat amicum:
Quid pure tranquillet; honos, an dulce lucellum,
An secretum iter & fallentis semita vita.*

Lib. i. Ep. 18.

In ev'ry state of life be sure of this,
Read o'er thy moral books, consult the wise,
How thou may'st live, how spend thine age in peace,
Lest avarice, still poor, disturb thine ease;
Or fears should shake, or cares thy mind abuse,
Or ardent hope for things of little use.
Whether arts virtue breed, or nature send
That lessens cares, what makes thy self thy friend,
What calms thee, honour, or admired wealth;
Or close retirement, and a life by stealth. CREECH.

HITHERTO we have instanced from his Satires with respect to the conduct of life; but as, besides his *Art of Poetry*, there are many of his Epistles and Satires that are wholly critical; it will be worth our while to take some notice of this part of his works, which may give us some farther light into his fine taste and discerning, and convince the Reader, our Author had taken due pains to improve his natural genius by study and observation,

WE may gather from the tenour of these Writings, that in his time however Poetry was very much improved, the publick taste was yet too vicious to relish all those improvements. Many liked the old harsh rumbling sound of their verses, and had not ears tunable enough as yet to relish the musick of *Virgil's*, or the softness of *Ovid's* numbers. * This bad taste so far prevailed, that even under *Vespasian* (when length of time should have added an authority to the general approbation *Virgil* had met with) there were some left that preferred *Lucan's* rugged numbers

* Quint. Dial. de Causis Corruptæ Eloquentiæ.

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bers to his. They were as much out in their taste of wit ; false pleasantry and little low turns meeting often with a favourable reception, when the true delicacy of thoughts and words was neglected. *Lucilius*, his predecessor in Satire, he more than once charges with want of harmony in his verse.

*Nempe incompósito dixi pede currere versus
Lucili.*—————

Well, Sir, I grant I said *Lucilius*' muse
Is uncorrect ; his way of writing loose. CREECH.

His periods were long and tedious ;

*Est brevitæ opus, ut currat sententia, non se
Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures.*

Lib. 1. Sat. 10.

THIS was the consequence of that indolence of temper, which made *Lucilius* want patience to bestow time and pains enough in correcting his compositions.

———— *Piger scribendi ferre laborem
Scribendi recte ; nam ut multum nil morer.* Ibid.

Besides, he often mixed Greek words with the *Latin*.

*At magnum fecit, quod verbis Græca Latinis
Miscuit.*————— Ibid.

IN his Epistle to *Augustus*, he tells him, that an unreasonable regard to antiquity was what so much misled them in their judgement.

*Sed tuus hic populus, sapiens & justus in uno,
Te nostris ducibus, te Græcis anteferendo,
Cetera nequaquam simili ratione modoque
Æstimat ; & nisi qua terris semota, tuisque
Temporibus defuncta videt, fastidit & odit.*

Lib. 2. Ep. 1.

That

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That she prefers, that she esteems thee more
 Than all the Heroes she enjoy'd before;
 Than all that she hath bred, or Greece can boast,
 In this, 'tis true, thy Rome is wise and just;
 But not in other things: the antient Plays,
 And foreign Poets only she can praise;
 The present, or contempt, or hate receive,
 'Tis crime enough that they are yet alive. CREECH.

THE other fault was their admiring false wit and
 scurvy quibbling jests, for which he has censured † *Plautus*
 as well as for his incorrect numbers.

*At nostri proavi Plautinos, & numeros, &
 Laudavere sales: Nimum patienter utrumque
 Ne dicam stulte mirati.*—— Art. Poet. ver. 270.

'Tis true, as I have heard, the former times
 Clap'd *Plautus*' wanton and uneven rhimes;
 With too much patience both (to say no more
 And call it folly) those our fathers bore.

BUT we need go no higher than *Cicero*, who in his
 Offices, proposes him as a pattern of true wit and fine
 turns; and no doubt to do both these excellent judges
 justice in their different opinions, both one and the other
 abound in that Author's Writings; though possibly what
 he is blameable for, was rather the fault of the age than
 his, as what he is admired for was the effect of his happy
 genius: And the censure here is not perhaps intended by
 HORACE as a reproach to him, so much as to bring off
 those of his own age from that unjust fondness they had
 for antiquity. Poetry like other arts, he shews was to
 be perfected by time, its beginning with the *Romans* was
 very rude and simple.

*Agricola prisca, fortes, parvoque beati
 Conditæ post frumenta, levantes tempore sesto*
 CORIUS,

† This objection to *Plautus* w'll be more fully answered in
 his Life in the second Volume.

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*Corpus, & ipsum animum spe finis dura ferentem,
Cum sociis operum, & pueris, & conjuge fida,
Tellurem porco, Silvanum lacte piabant,
Floribus & vino Genium memorem brevis avi.
Fescennina per hunc inventa licentia morem
Versibus alternis opprobria rustica fudit;
Libertasque recurrentes accepta per annos
Lusit amabiliter. ———*

Lib. 2. Ep. 1.

The ancient swains, those temp'rate happy swains,
Contented sov'reigns of their little plains,
When all their corn was hous'd, would make a feast,
Unbend their minds, and lay them down to rest;
Their cares dissolv'd into a happy thought,
Their minds enjoy'd the rest their labour sought.
A pig on *Tellus'* altars left his blood,
And milk from large brown bowls to *Sylvan* flow'd:
Their wives, their neighbours, and their prattling boys,
Were call'd, all tasted of the country joys:
They drank, they danc'd, they sang, made wanton sport,
Enjoy'd their selves, for life they knew was short.
Hence grew the liberty of the looser muse;
Hence they grew scurrilous, and would abuse:
Hence those loose dialogues at marriage feasts,
Yet still they were but mirth and country jests.

CREECH.

BUT the first polishing of these rudiments of Poetry
was due to Greece.

*Gracia capta ferum victorem cepit, & artes
Intulit agresti Latio. ———*

Lib. 2. Ep. 1.

THIS was not brought to pass 'till after the first
Punic War.

*Serus enim Gracis admovit acumina chartis
Et post Punica bella quietus, quarere cœpit
Quid Sophocles, & Thespis, & Æschylus utile ferrent. Ibid.*

'Twas long before Rome read the *Gracian* plays,
For cares took up her nights, and wars her days:

'Till

Till Carthage ruin'd, she grew soft in peace,
And then enquir'd what weighty *Sophocles*,
What *Eschylus*, what *Thespis* taught the age;
What good, what profit did commend the stage.

CREECH.

BUT what should seem monstrous of so polite a people;
(did not *Harlequin* furnish us lately, and now, with some
such instances at home) is, that not only the mob and
vulgar, but the Gentry, were better pleased with bear-
garden Entertainments, than a well-written Play; and
would suffer the Action to be interrupted for four hours
together, for the sake of these fine diversions.

— *Media inter carmina poscunt*

Aut ursum, aut pugiles: his nam plebecula gaudet.
Verum equitis quoque jam migravit ab aure voluptas
Omnis, ad incertos oculos & gaudia vana;
Quatuor aut plures aulae premuntur in horas. Ibid.

They'll leave the Stage to see a Puppet fight;
Or else the Bears, for that's the crowd's delight.
But now our Nobles too are fops and vain,
Neglect the scene, but love the painted scene.
Four hours are spent in show to please the sight.

Tanto cum strepitu ludi spectantur, & artes,
Divitiaque peregrina, ut quibus oblitus actor
Cum stetit in scena, concurrit dextera laeva.
Dixit adhuc aliquid! nil sane. Quid placet ergo?
Lana Tarentino violas imitata veneno. Ibid.

So great the shout, when rich and strangely dress'd
The Player comes, they clap his gaudy vest.
Well, hath the Actor spoken? Not a line:
Why then d'ye clap? Oh, Sir, his clothes are fine!

CREECH.

THOUGH it cannot be said of his *Art of Poetry*, that
it is strictly methodical, it must be allowed to answer
the end of a more regular Work. It was partly his hu-
mour

mour to write with ease, which is a character common to this Poem as well as his Satires and Epistles: add to this, that it is drawn up in the form of an Epistle, and at the same time is in many places satirical; as an Epistle, it was more agreeable to deliver the several precepts in a free unlimited manner, without being confined to the stricter rules of dogmatick writing, which was the more allowable, as done in verse, which required greater freedom to make it capable of poetical embellishments. Such is this illustration of the observation, that words, as well as other things, are subject to change.

*Ut silva foliis pronos mutantur in annos,
Prima cadunt: ita verborum vetus interit atas,
Et juvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque.
Debemur morti nos nostraque; sive receptus
Terra Neptunus, classes Aquilonibus arcet,
Regis opus; sterilisve diu palus aptaque remis,
Vicinas urbes alit, & grave sentit aratrum.
Seu cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus annis,
Doctus iter melius —————* Art. Poet. ver. 60.

As leaves on trees do with the turning year,
The former fall, and others will appear;
Just so it is in words, one word will rise,
Look green, and flourish when another dies.
All we, and ours, are in a changing state,
Just nature's debt, and must be paid to fate.
Great *Cæsar's* mole, that braves the furious tides,
Where now secure from storms his navy rides;
E'en that drain'd lake, where former Ages row'd
A great unfruitful waste, tho' now 'tis plough'd,
Bears corn, and sends the neigh'ring cities food.
Those new canals, that bound fierce *Tyber's* force,
That teach the streams to take a better course,
And spare the ploughman's hopes, e'en they must waste.

CREECH.

How genteely does the Poet compliment his Prince on this occasion; when speaking of the force of time, that destroys all things, he mentions these two works of that Prince;

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Prince; the draining a noisome lake, and turning the course of the Tiber. This again is a digression, which would not have been allowed our Author, had he proposed to be strictly methodical in handling his subject.

We have an example of his Satire in this Poem; where having commended the wits of Greece, he sharply exposes the Roman method of education.

*Romani pueri longis rationibus affem
Discunt in partes centum diducere. Dicat
Filius Albin, si de quincunce remota est
Uncia quid superat? poteras dixisse, triens: eu,
Rem poteris servare tuam: redit uncia quid sit?
Semis: at hac animos arugo & cura peculi
Cum semel imbuerit, speramus carmina fingi
Pesse linenda cedro; & levi servanda cupresso?* Ibid.

But as for us, our Roman youths are bred
To trades, to cast accounts, to write and read:
Come hither child (suppose 'tis Albin's son)
Hold up thy head; take five from forty-one,
And what remains? just thirty-six: Well done.
Add seven, what makes it then? Just forty-eight.
Ah! thou must be a man of an estate.
And when this care for gain all thoughts controuls,
When this base rust hath crusted o'er our Souls;
Ne'er think that such will reach a noble height:
These clogs must check, these weights retard their flight.
CREECH.

HAD it not been an Epistle, HORACE could not so happily have introduced this fine description of the excellency and usefulness of Poetry.

*Silvestres homines sacer interpresque deorum
Cadibus & victu fado deterruit Orpheus;
Dicitur ob hoc lenire tigres rapidosque leones.
Dicitur & Amphion, Thebana conditor arcis,
Saxa movere sono testudinis, & prece blanda
Ducere quo vellet, fuit hac sapientia quondam
Publica privatis secernere sacra profanis;*

*Concubitu prohibere vago, dare jura maritis;
Oppida moliri, leges incidere ligno.
Sic honor & nomen divinis vatibus, atque
Carminibus venit, Post hos insignis Homerus
Tyrtæusque mares animos in martia bella
Versibus exacuit: dicta per carmina sortes,
Et vitæ monstrata via est: & gratia regum
Pieris tentata modis: ludusque repertus,
Et longorum operum finis: ne forte pudori
Sit tibi Musa lyra solers & cantor Apollo.*

Ibid.

Fame says, inspired *Orpheus* first began
To sing God's laws, and make them known to man:
Their fierceness soften'd, shew'd them wholesome food,
And frighted all from lawless lust and blood.
And therefore fame hath told, his charming lute
Could tame a lion, and correct a brute.
Amphion too, as story goes, could call
Obedient stones to make the *Theban* wall;
He led them as he pleas'd, the rocks obey'd,
And danc'd in order to the tunes he play'd:
'Twas then the work of verse to make men wise,
To lead to virtue, and to fright from vice:
To make the savage, pious kind and just;

To build societies, and force confine,
This was the noble, this the first design;
This was their aim, for this they tun'd their lute,
And hence the Poets got their first repute.
Next *Homer* and *Tyrtæus* did boldly dare
To whet brave minds, and lead the stout to war:
In verse their Oracles the Gods did give,
In verse we were instructed how to live.
Verse recommends us to the ears of Kings,
And easeth minds, when clog'd with serious things;
And therefore, Sir, verse may deserve your care,
Which Gods inspire, and Kings delight to hear.

FROM the course of these remarks, it is hoped the
Poet's character and genius will easily appear, which was
sublime, unaffected, and universal: The first I believe no
Lyric

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Lyric or Epic Writer of the Antients can dispute with him, not *Virgil* excepted, whose admirable diction and sentiments hardly come up to some of the most finished Parts of HORACE's *Odes*. In the other two he may have some rivals, none but *Virgil* that can exceed him, whose genius, though rather more universal than other Poets, seemed not capable of descending to the familiar plainness and easy simplicity of HORACE's Satires and Epistles; as is discoverable from his Eclogues; which if any where deficient, it is that the style is not low enough for Shepherds and Goatherds. To conclude, we may in a particular manner apply to HORACE what he has said in the above-quoted description of some other Poets in general,

*Et vita monstrata via est, & gratia regum
Pierius tentata modis.*————





THE
L I F E
O F
O V I D.



VID was born at *Sulmo*, a Town in the Country of the *Peligni*, about ninety miles from *Rome*.

*Me pars Sulmo tenet Peligni tertia ruris,
Parva sed irriguis ora salubris aquis.
Sulmo mihi patria est gelidis saluberrimus undis,
Millia qui novies distat ab urbe decem.*

Trist. Lib. 4. El. 10.

It was at the time of celebrating the *Quinquatria* (which are Games instituted in honour of *Minerva*, and fall out about the 19th of our *March*) in that remarkable year when the Consuls, *Hirtius* and *Pansa*, were slain in the Battle of *Mutina* against *Antony*.

*Hæc est Armifera de festis quinque Minerva,
Qua fieri pugna prima cruenta solent.*

Editus

*Editus hinc ego sum, nec non, ut tempora, noris
Cum cecidit fato consul userque pari.*

Trist. Lib. 4. El. 10.

THIS battle was fought about forty-three years before the birth of *Christ*, the year of *Rome* 710. He was descended of a long train of ancestors of the Equestrian Order, which dignity none in the family had ever forfeited by any misdemeanour.

*Si genus excutias, equites ab origine prima
Usque per innumeros inveniemur avos.*

De Ponto, Lib. 4. El. 8.

BEING born to a fortune that facilitated the means of a good education, and in a time when the *Romans* were inclined to cultivate that learning they had begun to relish on their conquest of *Greece*, he wanted no opportunity of improvement. His parents first care was to make him perfectly acquainted with his mother tongue: For, notwithstanding the contrary practice of the moderns for the most part, it was the constant and laudable method of education among the *Romans*, first to give their youth a thorough knowledge of that; after which they usually proceeded to the Greek, which was then the only learned language. From his early youth the bent of his inclinations lay to Poetry; which however upon his Father's repeated intreaties he forsook, and studied the Law, forming himself for the practice of the Bar with great success. How his Father dissuaded him from Poetry, is pleasantly described thus; alluding to *Homer's* mean circumstances:

Sape pater dixit, Studium quid inutile tentas?

Maonides nullas ipse reliquit opes.

Trist. Lib. 4.

He studied Eloquence under those eminent masters, *Arellius Fuscus* and *Porcius Latro*, whose characters are so finely given us in the Writings of the Elder *Seneca*, who also mentions *OVID's* improvements under them; inso-much that he determined several private causes very judiciously, and frequently pleaded with great force and elegance in the Centumvir's Court.

L 3

Nec

*Nec male commissa est nobis fortuna reorum,
 Usque decem decies inspicienda viris.
 Res quoque privatas statui sine Crimine iudex.*

Trist. L. 2.

And was likewise made one of the Triumviri, who were magistrates of great authority that try'd criminal causes at Rome, like our Lord Chief Justices.

Deque viris quondam pars tribus una fui.

Ibid.

SOON after he had put on the *toga virilis*, which was done at seventeen years of age, *Augustus* honour'd him with the * *Latus Clavus*, an ornament only worn by persons of Quality; but upon the death of his elder brother, having nothing more at heart than leisure to pursue his poetical studies, and being hereby become master of a fortune large enough to satisfy his ambition, he bid adieu to publick affairs, and quitting the clamours of the Bar, return'd to the Muses. He had three wives, two of which he soon repudiated after marriage: His last wife *Perilla* he tenderly loved, and has frequently celebrated her beauty and virtue in his works. His fondness for her, gave him an occasion of discovering her genius to Poetry, which he happily improv'd, and so much indear'd himself to her by his affectionate carriage, that she not only made the best of wives while they continued together, but after his Banishment, notwithstanding some ungenerous solicitations to the contrary, remain'd inviolably faithful to him. He gives the following account of all three himself.

* The ornament of this Garment, was a kind of buttons like heads of nails, whence it is said to have taken its name: none but knights, senators, and priests were allowed to wear it; and knights generally wore them of a narrower sort, which was called *Angusticlavium*, so that this was an extraordinary honour conferred on our Poet, when *Augustus* gave him the *Laticlavium*. Others think it was only a border of purple that faced the senators gowns, who used to wear a double one, whereas the knights only wore it single, and this last seems the more plausible opinion of the two. *Vide Kennet's Antiq.*

Pæne

*Pæne mihi puero nec digna nec utilis uxor
Est data, qua tempus per breve nupta fuit.
Illi successit, quamvis sine crimine, Conjux ;
Non tamen in nostro firma futura toto.
Ultima, qua mecum seros permansit in annos,
Sustinuit conjux exulis esse viri.*

Ibid.

THIS last wife of his seems to have been of the *Fabian* family, from what he says elsewhere to *Fabius Maximus*, one of his friends. For writing to him after his banishment, and being ashamed to name himself after such a calamity, he describes himself by these two circumstances, that *Maximus* us'd sometimes to read in his compositions to him, and that he was married to one of his family.

*Cui tua non nunquam miranti scripta legebas,
Ille ego de vestra cui data nupta domo est.*

De Ponto Lib. 1. El. 1.

IF it was not this last wife that OVID speaks of, I think OVID was very indiscreet to mention it to *Maximus*, at a time when he was making his court to that nobleman, to perswade him to intercede with *Augustus* to recal him from banishment, and tell him he was the person who had first married, and afterwards divorced one of his relations.

His quality and merit soon gain'd him the friendship of the politest persons in Rome; among whom *Tibullus*, *Severus*, *Sabinus*, *Sext. Pompeius*, *Gracinus*, and *Flaccus*: all men of quality and fine parts, held the first place: And the learned *Hyginus* is said likewise to have been an intimate friend of our author's. He soon discovered a genius adapted to all kinds of Poetry, in each of which he might have excell'd, had he been a man of more application in his youth, and the latter part of his life less unfortunate. The natural indolence of his temper, joyn'd to the affluence of his fortune, and his wit and good humour in conversation, engaged him too much in company with those of his own and the fair sex, to leave him time enough to be so correct and exact in his compositions as it is to be

wished he had been. In compliance with this temper, he first compos'd Elegies, and such light pieces as he thought did not require so much exactness; pleasantly saying in one of them, that he had not applied to *Apollo* or the *Muses* for assistance, love being his only guide: The reader must judge whether this is a sufficient apology for his negligence; however, he thus begins his love Elegies:

*Me Venus artificem tenero praecepit amori,
 Typhis & Automedon dicar amoris ego.
 Non ego, Phoebe, datas a te mihi mentiar artes;
 Nec nos aëria voce monemur avis.
 Nec mihi sunt visa Clio, Cliaque sorores:
 Vera canam. Cæptis, mater amoris, ades.
 Artis Amatoriae, Lib. i. El. i.*

HE was pretty amorous in his youth, and, indulging the fashionable vice of the age, had several mistresses; one of which, is very much celebrated under the concealed name of *Corinna*. Thus love got the better of his inclination to Poetry in some measure; however, he found time from his gallantry to write his heroic Epistles and his *Fasts*. Several other compositions have been attributed to him, most of which have perished through the injury of time; but there are still many little poems extant under his name, most of which the best Critics have pronounced spurious, as being such as OVID would be ashamed to father, except that of *de Nuce*, and *de Medicine faciei*, which might perhaps be some of his juvenile compositions. He also wrote a poem *de Piscibus*, which *Oppian* is said to have imitated in his *Halieutics*: As also a poem against bad Poets, which is lost, and one on *Augustus Caesar's* triumphs, which he mentions in his Elegy to *Rufinus*.

*Utque tuo facias mandat, Rufine, triumpho,
 In vestras veniet si tamen ille manus.
 Est opus exiguum, vestrisque paratibus impar;
 Quale tamen cunque est, ut tueare, rogo.*

THERE

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THERE was a tragedy of his composing call'd *Medea*, much commended by *Quintilian* for the beauty of the expression, and the dignity of its sentiments, and generally admired by the ancients for an excellent piece. The Poet owns his talent this way himself, where he says,

*Sceptra tamen sumpsi, cura; tragœdia nostra
Crevit, & huic operi quamlibet aptus eram.*

Am. Lib. 2. El. 18.

His last work before his banishment, was the *Metamorphoses*, whereby he propos'd immortality to himself, as his last stake, which was undertaken with deliberation, and prosecuted with diligence; and it was his misfortunes which hindered him from giving it his last hand, and making it, as he intended, one of the correctest poems Rome had ever produced. He lived mostly at Rome, near the capitol, or only retired to his fine gardens a little way out of town in the Appian way, when he had a mind to converse with none but the Muses; though he had another villa in his native country, as we may learn from one of his elegies *de Ponto*.

*Non meus amissos animus desiderat agros,
Rura; Peligro conspicienda solo.
Nec quos pomiferis positos in collibus hortos
Spectat Flaminia claudia juncta via.*

De Ponto. Lib. 1. Eleg. 2.

THUS the Poet pass'd the better part of his life in a full enjoyment of his friends and the Muses, blest with the smiles of fortune and favour of his prince; and when he began to apply himself diligently to correct his *Metamorphoses*, of which the three first books seem scarcely to have received his last hand; a fatal turn in his affairs broke all his measures, and plunged him into the highest misfortune.

BY some indiscretion in his conduct, or by an accidental discovery of some passages at court, which were not fit to be known, he incurred the displeasure of *Augustus*, and by him was banished at fifty years of age to *Tomi*, a

town in *Pontus*, situated on the Black-sea, near one of the mouths of the Danube, in the midst of a rude and barbarous people, and at the extremity of the Roman empire.

*Postq; meos ortus Pisaa vinētus Oliva
Abstulerat decies pramia victor eques.*

*Cum maris Euxini positos ad lava Tomitas
Quarere me lasi principis ira jubet.* Ibid.

The looseness of his poetry, which corrupted the minds of the Roman youth, was made the pretence for his severe punishment; and the unhappy Poet had discretion enough not to reveal the true cause, fearing to offend more by doing it, and living not without hopes of obtaining a pardon in time, by patiently submitting to his fate, without murmuring.

*Nec breve, nec tutum est, peccati qua sit origo
Dicere; tractari vulnera nostra riment.* Ibid.

From a passage in *Suetonius*, where *Caligula* hints his mother (that was thought the daughter of *Julia* by her husband *Agrippa*) to have been the incestuous offspring of *Augustus*'s criminal commerce with his own daughter; some have imagined that *OVID* might have accidentally discovered this familiarity, or at least have gotten some hint of the matter. Others fancy he had discovered an intrigue between her and *Mecenas*: Not a few again have been fully persuaded that he himself had been too familiar with that wanton princess, whom he celebrated under the name of *Corinna*. This *Sidonius Apollinaris* tells us expressly as his opinion, and what was commonly received.

*Nec ut carmina per libidinosa
Notum, Naso tener, Tomosque missum
Quondam Casarea nimis puella
Fictio carmine subditum Corinna.*

In answer to the opinion of his intrigue with *Julia*, it must be remembered, that in more than one of his *Amorum*, he acknowledges he had enjoyed his *Corinna*; which, if

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if he meant *Julia*, he could not have the face to call an error, as he does that fault, which he says was the principal cause of his banishment, and must be kept secret.

*Cum me perdiderint dua crimina, carmen & error,
Alterius facti culpa tacenda mihi. De Ponto. Ibid.*

Besides, in the eleventh elegy of Book IV. *de Tristibus*, he tells us it was in his youth he loved *Corinna*, which therefore could not be supposed to bring this punishment upon him at fifty; and that, as we have seen, was his age at the time of his banishment. He was very young, as he says elsewhere, when his name and his mistress's grew famous at Rome by his Elegies.

*Carmina cum primum populo juvenilia feci,
Barba resecta mihi, bisve semelve fuit.
Moverat ingenium, totam cantata per urbem
Nomine non vero dicta Corinna, mihi.*

Trist. Lib. 4. El. 11.

And though the author was blameable for his looser writings, it was unseasonable to punish him for them at that time, and in his old age make him suffer for the extravagancies of his youth; besides, that way of writing was allowable in those times; and the Poet often wrote what he had never acted. * I have in another place observed the opinion and practice of the ancients in this particular. OVID. has somewhere excused himself to this effect. You may believe me, says he, my verse and my manners are different; my muse is merry, but my behaviour modest. Many things in my writings are feigned, and I have taken greater liberties in my Poetry, than I ever allowed my self.

*Crede mihi, mores distant a Carmine nostro;
Vita verecunda est, Musa jocosa mihi.
Magnaue pars operum mendax & ficta meorum,
Plus sibi permisit compositore suo. Epist. ad Aug.*

* See the life of Catullus.

In one of his elegies *de Ponto*, he has observed, 'twas having seen something that occasioned his banishment:

*Cur aliquid vidi, cur conscia lumina feci?
Cur imprudensi cognita culpa mihi?*

In another place he has given us a reason why he is silent; which is, not to renew *Augustus's* sorrows; since it is not fit, says he, that for one so inconsiderable as my self, so great a Prince should grieve a second time. The compliment to *Augustus* is very fine.

*Nam non sum tanti, ut renovem tua vulnera, Caesar,
Quem nimio plus est indoluisse semel.* Epist. ad Aug.

BUT let his fault be what it will, the prince continued inexorable to the repeated and most submissive importunities, and flattering addresses, of our ingenious Exile. There must be, one would think, something extraordinary in his ill fortune, that notwithstanding all his friends could say for him, who many of them had great interest at court, nor his own intreaties, could prevail so much as to mitigate the severity of his punishment: During which he so won upon the rude inhabitants of *Tomi*, by his obliging behaviour and pleasant temper, that they endeavoured to lessen his affliction by conferring many honours upon him. All this *OVID* well deserved, learning their barbarous language, and writing many little poems in it, which endeared him the more to them. Their kindnesses to him he acknowledges as follows.

*Molliter a vobis mea fors excepta, Tomita,
Tam mites Grajos indicat esse viros.
Quem vix incolumi cuiquam, salvoque daretis,
Is datus a vobis est mihi nuper honos.
Solus adhuc ego sum vestris immunis in oris,
Exceptis se qui munera legis habent.
Tempora sacrata mea sunt velata corona,
Publicus invito quam favor imposuit.*

De Ponto ad Tomitas.

THUS

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THUS lived our unhappy author something above seven years in exile, and died beloved and lamented by all; especially the people of *Tomi*, who publickly mourned for him, and buried him in a stately monument before the gates of the city; having when he was alive, always honoured and treated him as their patron and benefactor, rather than a banished man.

HE was of a pale complexion, his person of a middle stature, and slender, but graceful, and his body strong and nervous, though not large limbed.

*Membraque sunt cera pallidiora nova.
Pondere non nervis Corpora nostra carent.*

His death, according to *Apuleius*, happened about the first of *January*, the same day that *Livy*, the celebrated Roman historian, ended his life, in the year of *Rome* 767, about 16 years after the birth of CHRIST:

HE was naturally of a very peaceable temper, having never served in the wars, or meddled with any other weapons but such as he used when he took his exercises.

*Aspera militia juvenis certamina fugi,
Nec nisi lusura novimus arma manu.* Ibid.

Nor had he any inclination to satire, being of a very sweet and courteous disposition, till he was forced to it in his own defence. This happened in the first year of his banishment, when a person whose real name OVID has concealed under that of *Ibis*, touch'd him in so tender a point, and in so inhuman a manner, that being at too great distance to obtain any other satisfaction from him, it provoked him to draw his pen. The man it seems had made several base attacks on his wife's chastity, and had left no stone unturned to make her forget and despise her husband after his exile; and from a passage in the poem abovementioned, it should seem as if he was some false friend; for OVID accuses him with treacherously going off with the spoil, who ought to have assisted him in putting out the fire.

*Et qui debuerat subitas extinguere flammæ,
Is prædam medio raptor ab igne tulit.*

LET US now consider OVID a little farther with respect to his stile and character, as he is a Poet. His *Metamorphoses* is what has been most censured, though supposing it as faulty as some would have it, great allowances ought to be made for the manner of its publication; which was without the author's knowledge or consent, and during his banishment. The Poet had burn'd his own copy, despairing of ever giving it his last hand.

*Hæc ego discedens, sicut bona multa meorum,
Ipse mea posui mæstus in igne manu :
Vel quod eram Musas ut Crimina nostra perosus;
Vel quod adhuc crescens & rude carmen erat.*

Trist. Lib. 1. El. 6.

BUT it is not the design of this poem, which the critics find fault with; which is agreeable, learned and instructive; nor the connection of the several parts of the work, which is artful enough considering the little dependance they have on each other; nor his manner of telling a story, which is extreamly natural; nor his descriptions which are lively, strong, and beautiful, nor the passions; all which he has drawn so as to be the most exact copy of nature, at the same time that they are very moving and pathetic. 'Tis his luxuriancy of thought and expression for which he is blamed; and his own turn upon *Narcissus* may be retorted very justly upon himself;

—— *Inopem me Copia fecit.*

I wonder what these gentlemen would have said, had they seen the *Aeneid* before it was corrected. Its bulk must have been three times what it is now, if not more, and consequently had all that superfluity the judicious Poet afterwards pared off; yet still it must have been allowed a fine work in its design, in the conduct of it, &c. A rough Diamond has not a less intrinsic value, because it has not yet

yet been exactly well cut and polished. The truth is, that, as has been observed in the preface, the stile of poetry is what gives a poem its reputation in the world; and OVID, having been a little too negligent in this respect, has accordingly suffered in the opinion of his readers for it. Nevertheless, we may acknowledge the *Metamorphoses* to be a work of infinite use to his and our times, that deserves to be looked upon as the porch to the great temple of the Heathen *Mythology*, or as a master-key to all the ancient poets, and the best rudiments of the modern poets. Some to lessen OVID's merit, have observed it was not a work of his own invention; that he was only the compiler of it at best, and perhaps no better than a translator of *Parthenius*, the Greek poet. But this will prove no disadvantage to him, when we come to consider that *Virgil* was so far from being censured for interweaving the history of his country with the thread of his poem, that it was meant as one of his highest encomiums, when his Contemporaries stiled him the Roman Historian. And it is a mark that our author was possessed of no small stock of Greek learning to make so judicious a collection. They that call him a bare translator, are soon answered, by saying what is fact, That the *Greeks* so much admired the *Metamorphoses*, that they took the pains to translate it into their own language; which it is absurd to suppose they would have done, had the whole, or the main part, already been extant in a poem in their own tongue. For it was observable of them, as well as of a polite neighbouring nation, that they were too fond of their own productions, to translate any thing from another language, which did not exceed all of their own in that kind. Now unless we will set up for better judges of good writing than the *Greeks* and *Romans* of the *Augustan* age, we must allow it, although not an epick poem, to be a work of genius, and not unworthy its author, who, though he burned his copy, when he found no hopes left of giving it his last hand, had yet staked his reputation on the success of it with posterity, and ventured from thence to challenge a title to immortality.

Jamque

*Jamque opus exegi, quod nec Jovis ira, nec ignes,
Nec poterit ferrum, aut ingens abolere vetustas.*

IF we examine the *Metamorphoses* more particularly, we shall find it abounding with many beauties, with this censure, that the Author, like his own *Daphne*, should have fled from the God of Wit, and then, like that God in the fable, he would have filled his arms with Bays. His first and second books seem the most finished and correct, though none are entirely free from the redundancies of his fancy. In the first he has shewn himself a good Philosopher as well as a good Poet. The description of the Chaos and the first formation of things by an almighty and all-wise Being, is truly sublime; and the whole finely imagined. I don't know any of the Antients that have set the creation in so beautiful a light, and drawn many of the circumstances so conformable to truth. The divine *Plato* himself has much grosser conceptions, making the world to be, not the workmanship, but the only son (*Μονογενής*) of God; and *Virgil* makes the supream Being no better than the soul of the world. All the circumstances of the deluge are strongly painted, and the description of the south wind full of a beautiful terror. That of the golden age may be compared with *Virgil's* in the second *Georgic*. The Description of the river *Peneus*, with the Cascade or Fall of its waters, deserve the reader's notice, though I think it has suffered in the Translation.

———— *Peneus ab imo*

*Effusus Pindo spumosis volvitur undis:
Dejectaque gravi tennes agitantia fumos
Nubila conducit, summasque aspergine sylvas
Impluit, & sonitu plusquam vicina fatigat.*

Met. Lib. 1.

NOTHING can be added to the beauty of the expression and numbers here, which are a lively echoe to the sense, and shew the abilities of our Author, when he would be at the trouble. Mr. *Dryden*, in his translation, has entirely neglected that fine Metaphor, *summasque as-*
pergius

pergine Sylvas Impluit; which is one of the noblest and juilest parts of the description; the reader may judge.

Through this the rapid *Peneus* takes his course,
From *Pindus* rowling with impetuous force.
Mists from the river's mighty fall arise,
And deadly damps enclose the cloudy skies:
Perpetual fogs are hanging o'er the wood,
And Sounds of waters deaf the neighbourhood.

GARTH.

THE court of the River-God, which the Poet afterwards describes, may bear a comparison with *Virgil's* subterranean grott of *Cyrene* in the fourth *Georgic*.

OVID's comparisons are remarkably short and proper, though perhaps sometimes trivial; in general, they never fail to present some pleasing idea to the imagination, and very significantly illustrate the subject.

HE is frequently guilty of spinning out the same thought, which sometimes weakens what he had very happily said before. I shall offer one or two out of many instances. Speaking of the Deluge, he sublimely says, — *Omnia pontus erant* — He goes on and lessens the same thought — *Deerant quoque littora ponto*. The other is in the same book, where the Poet compares *Apollo* in pursuit of *Daphne*, to a greyhound coursing after a hare. The reader will find the latter part of the last line not only superfluous, but lessening the images he had drawn before; this fault the translator has avoided.

*Ut canis in vacuo leporem cum Gallicus arvo
Vidit, & hic pradam pedibus petit, ille salutem :
Alter in hæsuro similis jam jamque tenere
Sperat, & extento stringit vestigia rostro ;
Alter in ambiguo est an sit deprensus, & ipsis
Morsibus eripitur, tangentiaque ora relinquit.*

Met. L. 1.

As when the impatient greyhound, slipt from far,
Bounds o'er the glebe to course the fearful hare ;
She

She in her speed does all her safety lay,
 And he with double speed pursues the prey,
 O'er-runs her at the sitting turn, and licks
 His chaps in vain, and blows upon the flicks;
 She 'scapes, and for the neighbouring covert hies,
 And gaining shelter, doubts if yet she lives. GARTH.

To make the Poet and reader some amends, I shall transcribe some more of OVID's descriptions and comparisons, which will atone for his above-mentioned negligence; and refer the reader for more to the preface to Sir Samuel Garth's translation. The earth's production of all kinds of animals after the Deluge is admirably compared to the sun's producing some, after the Nile has overflowed the country, out of the mud and slime it leaves behind. Though this is not very philosophical and not credible, it is allowable in Poetry, and so not less ornamental.

*Sic ubi deseruit madidos septemfluus agros
 Nilus, & antiquo sua flumina reddidit alveo,
 Ætheroque recens exarsit sidere limus;
 Plurima cultores versis animalia glebis
 Inveniunt, & in his quadam modo nata, sub ipsum
 Nascendi spatium, quadam imperfecta, suisque
 Trunca vident numeris: & eodem in corpore saepe
 Altera pars vivit, rudis est pars altera tellus.*

Lib. 1. Met.

Thus when the Nile from Pharian fields is fled,
 And seeks with ebbing tides his antient bed,
 The fat manure with heavenly fire is warm'd,
 And crusted creatures, as in wombs, are form'd:
 These, when they turn the glebe, the peasants find
 Some rude and yet unfinish'd in their kind;
 Short of their limbs, a lame imperfect birth:
 One half alive, and one of lifeless earth. GARTH.

THE description of the morning in the second Book, is very poetical and entertaining.

—Ecce vigil rutilo patefecit ob ortu
 Purpureas aurora fores, & plena rosarum
 Atria, diffugiunt stellæ: quarum agmina cogit
 Lucifer, & cœli statione novissimus exit.
 At pater ut terras, mundumque rubescere vidit,
 Cornuaque extrema velut evanescere luna,
 Fungere aquos Titan velocibus imperat horis.
 Jussa dea celeres peragunt: ignemque vomentes
 Ambrosia succo saturos præsepibus altis
 Quadrupedes ducunt, adduntque sonantia fræna.

L. 2. Met.

When now the morn disclos'd her purple rays;
 The stars were fled, for *Lucifer* had chac'd
 The stars away, and fled himself the last:
 Soon as the father saw the rosy morn,
 And the moon shining with a blunter horn,
 He bid the nimble hours without delay
 Bring forth the steeds; the nimble hours obey:
 From their full racks the generous steeds retire,
 Dropping ambrosial foams, and snorting fire.

GARTH.

THE fountain in which *Narcissus* beheld his own
 beauty and met his ruin, is thus charmingly described.

Fons erat illimis nitidis argenteus undis,
 Quem neque pastores, neque pasta monte capella
 Contigerant aliudve pecus, quem nulla volucris
 Nec fera turbarat, nec lapsus ab arbore ramus.
 Gramen erat circa quod proximus humor alebat,
 Sylvaque sole lacum passura tepecere nullo.

Met. Lib. 4.

There stands a fountain in a darksome wood,
 Not stain'd with falling leaves, nor rising mud;
 Untroubled by the breath of winds it rests;
 Unfollied by the touch of men or beasts:
 High bowers of shady trees above it grow,
 And rising Grass and chearful greens below.

GARTH.
 BUT

BUT this Poet is not only redundant sometimes in his expressions, he has also an unseasonable redundancy of wit, which is unpardonable. His genius was like a rich soil, that with the finest flowers produces the rankest weeds. The story of *Narcissus* particularly, abounds with these turns, and there are but too many of them to be met with throughout the work. It is the more strange, OVID, who was so polite a man, as well as a fine writer, should seem fond of such witticisms, in an age, when the court so little countenanced them: *Virgil* is so far from trifling in this manner, that you will hardly find above two or three turns on the words in all his writings.

THOUGH the several stories in the *Metamorphoses* were so inconsistent, as hardly to become uniform members of one regular body, the Poet has made a shift to set them tolerably together, and has frequently shewn his ingenuity, in slipping almost insensibly from one story to another. Some have for this reason compared the texture of his connections to that of his *Arachne*, in whose artful web the colours were so nicely blended, that the eye could hardly distinguish where the one begins and the other ends.

LIKE the rest of his contemporaries, he has not been wanting in the praises of his prince; and perhaps, except *Virgil*, none has flatter'd *Augustus* with greater dexterity: one or two masterly strokes of his art are worth the reader's notice. In *Lib. XV. Julius Caesar*, after he was deified, looks down with pleasure on his son.

—— *Natique videns benefacta fatetur
Esse suis majora, & vinci gaudet ab illo.*

A LITTLE lower, he wonderfully increases the compliment, and says,

*Hic sua præferri quanquam vetat acta paternis,
Liberâ fama tamen, nullisque obnoxia jussis
Invitum præfert. ———* Met. Lib. 15.

Thus rais'd, his glorious off-spring *Julius* view'd
Beneficently great, and scattering good

Deeds,

Deeds, that his own surpals'd, with joy beheld,
And his large heart dilates to be excell'd.
What though this prince refuses to receive
The preference which his juster subjects give;
Fame uncontroul'd, that no restraint obeys,
The homage shun'd by modest virtue pays,
And proves disloyal only in his praise.
Tho' great his fire, him greater we proclaim.

GARTH.

IN the two first, we admire the affectionate condescension of the father, and in the three last lines, applaud the pious gratitude of the son, and are pleased to see it so well rewarded. What *Apollo* says to *Daphne*, is likewise agreeably introduced by the Poet, and contains a fine panegyric to his prince and country.

*Tu ducibus latis aderis, cum lata triumphum
Vox canet, & longa visent Capitolia pompa,
Postibus Augustis eadem fidissima custos
Ante fores stabis, mediamque tuebere quercum.*

Met. L. 1.

Thou shalt the Roman festivals adorn,
And after Poets, be by victors worn.
Thou shalt returning *Cæsar's* triumphs grace,
When pomps shall in a long procession pass,
Wreath'd on his posts before his palace wait,
And be the sacred guardian of the gate.

GARTH.

WE have before observed OVID's redundancy of expression, but it should have been confessed, that at other times he is admirably sententious, and that with a great deal of life and clearness. Such is the Sun's answer to *Phaeton*, who desired to drive his father's chariot as a proof of his paternal affection for him.

* *Pignora certa petis, do pignora certa timendo.*

Met. L. 2.

* It were to no purpose to give the translation of these little passages out of *Ovid*, since their beauty consists in their concise and sententious brevity, which cannot be so happily rendred in our, or any modern language.

THAT

THAT of *Hercules* to *Achelous*, who after having assumed several shapes in vain, at last takes that of a snake.

Cuiarum labor est angues superare mearum.

Met. L. 8.

BUT our Poet never excells himself so much as when he touches upon love; then all hearts feel the same emotions, and are sensible of the passion he describes; so that he very justly said of himself in the beginning of his love elegies.

Me Venus artificem tenero prafecit amori.

Am. L. 1. El. 1.

How great is the struggle between passion and shame in these lines, where *Biblis* attempts to write and discover her unlawful flame.

*Incipit, & dubitat: scribit, damnatque tabellas:
Et notat & delet: mutat, culpatque probatque.*

Met. L. 9.

How natural is *Procris's* passion, who being prompted by her jealousy to seek the confirmation of her tears, yet hopes the contrary.

—— *Speratque miserrima falli.*

Met. L. 7.

And this thought

—— *Sed cuncta timeamus amantes.*

Ibid.

OVID seldom rises above the middle style, and is too negligent in his numbers: not but that we have given some instances of the sublime. I shall here subjoin a line, which has been the subject of universal admiration for the harmonious energy, and propriety of the numbers to the subject, where he speaks of the rivers overflowing their banks.

Exspatiata

Exspatiata ruunt per apertos flumina campos. Met. L. 1.

Again, though he has many puerilities, occasioned from his not rightly managing that prodigious stock of wit he was master of; he has many admirable turns of thought and words, with which his heroic epistles particularly abound; where they are likewise more justifiable, as better suiting the softness of the Elegiac, than the majesty of the Heroic verse. There is a fine example of the turn upon words in the last Book of the *Metamorphoses*, though I think the gravity of the subject does not so well admit of it in that place:

*Heu quantum scelus est in viscera viscera condì,
Alteriusque animantem animantis vivere leto.*

Met. L. 15.

ANOTHER more delicate turn is to be met with in Sappho's epistle to Phaon:

*Si nisi quæ forma poterat te digna videri
Nulla futura tua est, nulla futura tua est.*

If some of his sentiments and turns are admirable for their delicacy, there are others no less beautiful for their simplicity; such is that line so much admired by that unhappy prince the *Royal Martyr*, which he made use of himself as a comfort in his highest misfortunes.

Qui decumbit humi, non habet unde cadat.

De Pon. L. 3. El. 5.

It were endless to make many quotations on this head; what has been already quoted may suffice to give the reader a thorough insight into the author's genius, for which end only they were made. If I present him with one or two more; it will be out of what one might not improperly call his posthumous works, I mean those pieces he composed during his banishment; to shew that OVID's genius surmounted all his calamities, and that the Muses were his most faithful friends.

Me

*Me quoque Musa levat Ponti loca jussa petentem;
Sola comes nostra persistis illa fuga.*

Trist. L. 1. El. 3.

'Twas this enabled him patiently to submit to his hard fortune, and thank *Augustus* for sparing his life and estate.

*Vita data est, citraque necem tua constitit Ira,
O Princeps, parce viribus use tuis;
Insuper accedunt te non adimente paterna,
Tanquam vita parum muneris esse, opes.*

Epist. ad Aug.

HIS epistle to that Prince abounds with fine and delicate sentiments, such are

*Spes mihi magna subit, cum te, mitissime Princeps;
Spes mihi, respicio cum mea fata; cadit.* Ibid.

WHEN he considers so gracious a prince as *Augustus*, he has some hopes of pardon; but when he looks back upon himself and what he deserv'd, he loses it again. In the following distich he makes the same prince a fine compliment, saying, That he as it were divides himself for the good of his people; and while he is personally at Rome, he sends *Tiberius*, animated with part of his genius, to carry on the war.

*Dimidioque tui prasens es, & aspicias urbem,
Dimidio procul es savaque bella geris.*

Ibid.

A LITTLE after he declares it no wonder to him that he found so few friends in his calamity, for that he was ready to be his own enemy, when he reflected that he was under the displeasure of so excellent a prince.

*Esse sed irato quis te mihi posset amicus;
Vix tunc ipse mihi non inimicus eram,*

Ibid.

OVID

OVID was not content with thus flattering the offended Prince in his own person, and that of *Tiberius* his successor, he thinks he has but gone thro' half his task till he has likewise praised him in his beloved consort *Livia*. He strips two of the three contending Deities of all their beauties to adorn her mind and person.

*Quæ Veneris formam, mores Junonis habendo
Sola est Cœlesti digna reperta toro.*

Ibid.

BUT the Poet surpasses himself, when speaking of the Emperor's building a temple to Justice, he says he had long before consecrated the temple of his mind to that Deity.

*Nuper eam Cæsar facto de marmore templo,
Jam pridem posuit mentis in ade sue.*

Ibid.

IN the midst of these encomiums, he has not forgot, in the same epistle, to make his apology to the charge laid against him, for corrupting the Roman youth by his loose poetry. For having shewn that all other Poets had been guilty of the same fault, and passed unpunished, he does not except *Virgil*, the chastest of them all, whose Episode of *Dido* and *Æneas*, is a continued Scene of unlawful love; and yet, says our unhappy Author, there is not a part of all his works half so much read as this.

*Nec legitur pars ulla magis de corpore toto,
Quam non legitimo fœdere junctus amor.*

Ibid.

THESE examples are enough to convince the reader, that his Genius was stronger than his misfortunes; upon the whole, when we come to sum up his character, we find it difficult to determine, whether he failed out of choice, or for want of judgment. *Seneca* the Rhetorician, is of opinion, that he knew his faults and lik'd them; and us'd to compare his poems, to a fine face, that look'd never the worse for having a mole in it. *Decentiorẽ ajebat esse faciem, in qua aliquis nevus exstaret.* And the same Author relates this story of him, that some of his friends, upon pe-

M

ruling

using one of his pieces, desired him to take out two verses they would shew him, as unworthy of the rest; he on his part consented, with this proviso, that they would let him except two in his turn; when the matter came to an issue, the verses which they produced, prov'd the same that he had excepted. These are the two:

*Semibovemque virum, semivirumque bovem.
Egelidum Borean, egelidumque Notum.*

BUT it is likely this happen'd in his youth, and that his riper years would have reform'd his taste, and made him strike out such puerilities; for the same writer assures us, none had a more correct style than he in prose, and that he was an excellent Orator. In general, it may be said of OVID, that he had a most extensive wit, supported by a quick and lively fancy, a just conception, which he discover'd in a tender and agreeable, and when he would be at the pains, a sublime and noble expression. We find in him that charming way of relating a story in verse, that we so much admire in *Livy's* prose: both make it agreeable, by inserting in their due place, those little circumstances, which are essential to the well telling of it, and so insensibly attach our attention to it. We may even venture to say, that he was a perfect master of his art, in all its branches; but that the natural indolence of his temper, and the gayety of his youth, together with the misfortunes that clouded the latter part of his life, prevented his aspiring to the title of a sublime heroic Poet. But so long as easy wit, nature, and delicacy are valued, all persons of good taste will allow him to have been, if not the most correct, at least one of the most agreeable and instructive Poets that ever wrote. So that no body that has any acquaintance with his writings, will refuse a good wish to his ashes, which was his only request in the Epitaph he has made for himself, and is beautiful for its simplicity, which I think is the true character of those pieces.

*Hic ego qui jaceo, tenerorum lusor amorum,
Ingenio perii Naso poeta meo.*

*At tibi, qui transis, ne sit grave, quisquis amasti,
Dicere Nasonis molliter ossa cubent.*

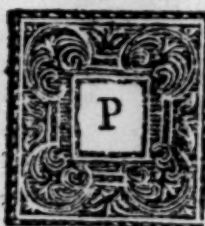
Which I have thus attempted in English :

Here OVID lies, who sang of tender Love,
Yet liv'd the danger of his wit to prove :
To you, true lovers, he makes one request,
As you pass by, to say, may OVID rest.





THE
L I F E
O F
P H Æ D R U S.



H Æ D R U S, of whom little notice has been taken by the ancients, was born, as I take it, some years before *J. Caesar* had made himself sole master of the Roman Empire. He was by birth a *Thracian*, and has declared, he can see no reason to be ashamed of his country, *Linus* and *Orpheus* being both natives of it.

*Cur somno inerti deseram patriæ decus?
Threïssa cum gens numeret auctores suos,
Linoque Apollo sit parens, Musa Orpheo.* Præf. L. 3.

HE farther boasted, that his mother was deliver'd of him on the *Pierian* mountain, famous among the Poets
for

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for being the feat of the Muses, and according to him, the very place of their birth.

*Ego, quem Pierio mater enixa est fugo.
In quo tonanti sancta Mnemosyne, Jovi,
Fecunda novies, artium peperit Chorum.* Præf. L. 3.

His parentage is uncertain, tho' some have imagin'd his liberal education to be an argument that it was not mean: perhaps he might have been made captive by *Octavius*, the father of the Emperor *Augustus*; for we read, that whilst *Octavius* was Prætor in *Macedonia*, he gave the *Thracians* a very great overthrow. This fell out in the same year that *Q. Cicero* was pro-consul of *Asia*, and *Cæsar* sole Consul at *Rome*. As this opinion would carry his age pretty high, *PHÆDRUS* outliving the 18th year of *Tiberius*, some have therefore rejected it, tho' with little reason, because we frequently find him complaining of the weight of years. How he came into the service of *Augustus* is unknown; but the very title of his Book proves he was that prince's slave, and from him received his freedom, and with it, no doubt, such presents as enabled him to enjoy so valuable a gift. He expresses a great regard to that Prince's memory, which he had the more reason to do, his misfortunes soon beginning after that Emperor's decease. For under *Tiberius*, he was unjustly persecuted by *Sejanus*, to which he has frequently alluded in his fables; particularly in the preface to his third Book: Having there observ'd, that *Æsop* compos'd several fables to vindicate his innocence, that was oppress'd during his slavery; he adds, that he had done the same himself, having compos'd some that had an immediate reference to his own misfortunes.

*Ego porro illius semita feci viam,
Et cogitavi plura quam reliqueras:
In Calamitatem deligens quadam meam.
Quod si Accusator alius Sejano foret,
Si testis alius, judex alius denique,
Dignum faterer esse me tantis malis.
Nec his dolorem dilinirem remediis.* Præf. L. 3.

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As to the occasion of *Sejanus's* hatred to him, and the particular circumstances of our Author's sufferings, we are in the dark; tho' it was not for his riches that he suffer'd, he having avoided making use of those opportunities, which *Augustus's* bounty afforded him of growing rich, observing how fatal it had proved in those troublesome times, to be possess'd of great estates. This he says on occasion of the fable of the man and the ass, who cunningly refused eating the barley that was brought him, having observed that the hog which was fed with it before had been kill'd; therefore, fearing the same fate, should he partake of that food, he absolutely refus'd it.

*Hujus respectu fabula deterritus,
Periculosum semper vitavi lucrum.* Fab. 4. L. 5.

BUT he was not so indifferent to glory, which in spite of envy and detraction, he had fully gain'd and establish'd.

*Ergo hinc abesto livor, ne frustra gemas
Quoniam mihi solemnus debetur gloria.* Præf. L. 3.

And he was not only confident of his own reputation at that time, but believ'd it would descend to posterity with his works, and immortalize the name of his Patron *Particulo*.

*Particulo, chartis nomen victurum meis
Latinis dum manebit pretium litteris.* Fab. 5. L. 5.

And he brings it as an argument of the excellency of his style and writings, that persons of *Particulo's* good taste and fine understanding, approved them, and imitated his expressions.

*Mihi parva laus est, quod tu, quod similes tui
Vestras in Chartas verba transfertis mea.
Dignumque longa judicatis memoria.
Inlitteratum plausum non desidero.*

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EUTYCHUS was another Patron of *Phædrus's* to whom he has inscribed the third Book. Who they were is uncertain; he speaks of *Eutychus* in the Epilogue to the fourth Book, as one employed in the greatest affairs, and whose power was able to protect him from his enemies. He seems to have written all his fables after the death of *Augustus*: the third he certainly wrote after that of *Sejanus*, who was put to death the eighteenth year of *Tiberius*; for he has there mentioned that favourite with a resentment that would never have been pardoned, had he been living. How long PHÆDRUS survived him is uncertain; however, supposing him to have lived little longer, he must have been above seventy at his death; for so many years there are from *Cæsar's* first dictatorship, to the eighteenth year of *Tiberius*.

BEFORE we examine into this Author's manner of writing fable, it may be worth while to enquire a little into the origin and nature of such writings in general. Fable seems of the greatest antiquity, and has in all ages been held in the highest esteem and veneration. In the earliest times, all the mysteries of Religion and Philosophy were couched under it; and thereto, most nations in the world owe their first instructions in their duty, and seem to have been first civilized by it; and the divine wisdom has frequently condescended in this manner to explain it self to mankind. Children and the ruder part of mankind, we find by experience, will more readily apprehend the moral to be drawn from a fable, than the conclusion of a just piece of reasoning. *Æsop* is made the common father and inventor of this way of writing; though doubtless it was the practice of all the eastern nations many ages before him, and he can only be reckoned the inventor of it, as being the person who first introduced it among the Greeks, whose vanity was generally unwilling to acknowledge what they owed to the *Phœnicians* and *Ægyptians*, from whom indeed they derived their religion and learning: And among the Greeks, the *Milesian Tales* are mentioned as of much greater antiquity. He at least seems the first among the Greeks, who immediately applied, and directly confined all his fables to morality. It is likely but few of those, which

M 4.

are

are now extant, and go under his name, were of his composing: many of them have been attributed to *Socrates*, who is said by *Plato*, to have employed part of his last hours in putting some of *Æsop's* into verse. But Fable in general may be carryed much higher than *Æsop*, if we consider it, as the parent of Heroic and Dramatic, and almost all kinds of Poetry. Fiction or fable is essentially necessary, not only to adorn it, but likewise to convey the several precepts and doctrines couched under that disguise, in a more agreeable manner to the understanding. You must win the heart to inform the mind. Pride and self-love render mankind too averse to instruction, to receive it when plainly given: if you would succeed, you must conceal your design, and imitate the Bee, which carries honey in her mouth, while she conceals the sting in her tail. Besides, by leaving a man to apply the tale to himself, he has the satisfaction of imagining his compliance with the counsel contained under it, entirely owing to his own judgment; and not, as it really is, to your direction. Besides, we judge more impartially where we think our selves not concerned; and, with *David*, often find ourselves included in the sentence we pass against another. But farther, what is an Epic Poem, stripped of all its ornaments, but a well invented fable, carryed on with a just probability through several circumstances? And yet it is of such a work, that a great Critic pronounces,

—*Quid sit pulchrum, quid rectum & utile, quid non
Rectius & melius Chrysippo & Crantore dicit.*

BUT to return to Fables properly so called. Man being styled the little world, he can never have better opportunity of viewing himself in all the varieties of his character, than when described in those of beasts, &c. These Fable makes use of as an exact mirror to shew him to himself. Thus *Prometheus*, when he was about to make a man, took the ruling quality of every beast, and from a composition of so odd a mixture, produced the human species. Thus much of this kind of writing in general.

A FABLE may be said to consist of two parts, Body and Soul. The Body is the Fable it self; the Soul the Moral

ral included in that Fable, and sometimes expressed in a short sentence before or after it. *Æsop* always set the Moral after the Fable, which he related in a plain and simple style. Our Author has improved upon him, by often prefixing the Moral to the Fable, and relating it in a more agreeable, polite, and concise manner. Brevity is essential to the telling a story well; and yet this brevity must be accompanied, or rather seasoned with a spirit; without which, the best invented tale appears dull and flat in the narration. PHÆDRUS has given a relish to the *Laconic* style with the *Attic* salt, which by the bye, I think cannot so properly be called wit, as a just, clear, and elegant turn of expression. Such as we may imagine in the conversation of persons of good sense, and perfectly well bred. And here I shall venture to observe, though I digress in doing so, that the Antients in general (*Horace* and *Ovid*, with a few others of the Romans excepted, *Lucian* and *Aristophanes* among the Greeks) seem to have been perfectly strangers to, and unacquainted with what we now call wit; at least the modern notion of wit differs from theirs. But I cannot pretend to examine this point any farther than in the case before us: And herein I will venture to say, *La Fontaine's*, and our *Prior's* manner of telling a story, as much exceeds PHÆDRUS's elegant simplicity, as his does the plain and artless manner of *Æsop*. I hope I need not remind the reader, that the just regard we deservedly pay the Antients, should not prejudice us against the Moderns. For when we have allowed all that is due to these latter ages, on the account of the many improvements made by them in the several Sciences, the Antients will still be rich enough, and besides the merit of having preceded us therein, which is accidental, have carried many Arts to greater heights, than what we have yet been able to attain, though we have the benefit of their knowledge to improve by; and especially Poetry, of which this is the only branch perhaps, wherein we can pretend to have exceeded them.

To return to PHÆDRUS: His Fables are a work generally valued by the learned for the purity of the language, which is very like that of *Terence*; and they who imagine they discover something foreign and barbarous in his

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style, say so, rather because they fancy there must be something of this in it, because he was a *Thracian* born, than that they could ever really find it so. But this supposition vanishes, if we admit of the account here given of his early captivity, and consequently his education at *Rome*. It being no new thing with the Romans, when they discovered a promising disposition in their slaves, to give them a compleat education. I shall set down a passage from the fourth Book, where he has quoted a verse of *Ennius's*, which, he says, he remembers to have read when he was a child; and this I think will be a strong argument in favour of the former account, and a good answer to the aforesaid Objection.

*Ego quondam quam legi puer sententiam,
"Palam mutire plebeio piaculum est"
Dum sanitas constabis pulcre meminero.*

Ep. 8. Lib. 4.



THE



THE
L I F E
O F
M A N I L I U S.

MARCUS MANILIUS, is a writer that has been so strangely neglected by his contemporaries, that we scarce find any account at all of him among them ; so that the most probable, is what may be discovered from some passages in his works. The time he lived, has been long controverted among the learned, with this wide difference, that while some were for placing him among the poets of the Augustan Age, others carried him down to that of *Theodosius*, and will have him be the *Manlius Theodorus*, celebrated by *Claudian*, in his Panegyric inscribed to one of that name. Some of those that allow him to have lived in *Augustus's* time, make him a stranger, an *Asiatic*, and indeed the same person with one *Manlius Antiochus*, who was brought captive to *Rome* by *Sylla*. According to this account, it will appear upon computation, that he was about

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about 120 years old at the time of writing his *Astronomics*, which is an age to which not one in ten millions ever arrive at, much less are able to write at those years: and yet, if he were that *Manlius Antiochus*, he could not be much younger when he wrote that poem: For according to the elder *Pliny*, it was ninety five years from the coming of *Manlius Antiochus* to Rome, to the death of *Augustus*; and presently upon his arrival, we are assured by the same Author, that MANILIUS publicly profess and taught the Mathematics; to fit him for which profession, we cannot allow him to be much less than thirty at that time. Besides, it is evident, the *Astronomics* were written a few years before *Augustus's* decease, the Poet having mentioned *Varus's* overthrow in Germany, which happened but five years antecedently to it.

* *Externas modo per gentes ut fœdere rupto
Cum fera ductorem rapuit Germania Varum,
Infecitque trium legionum sanguine campos.*

L. I. v. 895.

When faithless Germans did of late rebel,
And tempt their fate; when generous *Varus* fell,
And three brave legions blood, the plain did drown.
Creech.

WE may most probably conjecture, that he is the person spoken of elsewhere by the same *Pliny*, who mentions the ingenious contrivance of one *Manlius* a Mathematician, that by *Augustus's* order, had set up a golden ball, on an Obelisk, which ball was so contrived, that its shadow marked the hours, being a kind of zodiacal Sun-Dial. This invention, says the Naturalist, gained him much honour. Whether he was descended from the illustrious *Manlian* family, or only adopted into it, is likewise a question not absolutely to be determined, though it is most probable he was of that family, the politeness of his style, and the extensive learning found in his works, arguing a generous birth and liberal education. Though others have neglected to mention this writer, it seems strange *Ovid* should have made no mention of him, who has in one of his

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his Elegies made a long enumeration of most of the Poets of his time. In answer to this, it may be said, that *Manilius* seems not to have finished his *Astronomics* till after *Ovid's* banishment, and he might not publish them till some time afterwards, and consequently might be a stranger to *Ovid*, at least as a Poet. That *Quintilian* should pass him over in silence, is altogether unaccountable. The dedication of the poem to *Augustus* sufficiently proves his living under that prince, and that it could be no other prince than *Augustus*, will appear from the corroborating testimony of another passage or two, which will unquestionably fix the time to where I have placed it. The dedication runs thus, and strongly points out *Augustus*.

*Nunc mihi tu Caesar, patria princepsque paterque
Qui regis Augustis parentem legibus orbem,
Concessumque patri mundum deus ipse mereris,
Das animum viresque facis ad tanta canendum.*

Lib. 1. v. 7.

Rome's prince and father, thou whose wide command
With artful sway is stretch'd o'er sea and land,
Who dost deserve that heav'n thy love bestow'd
On thy great father. Thou thy self a God,
Now give me courage, make my fancy strong,
And yield me vigor for so great a song. *Creech.*

What follows will support what has been advanced on this head.

*Ne dubites homini divinos credere visus,
Jam facit ipse deos, mittitque ad sidera numen,
Majus & Augusto crescit sub Principe Cælum.*

Ibid.

Nor must you vainly doubt that man's allow'd
To know heav'n's mind, since man can make a God.
A star new rais'd, the sky enlarg'd contains,
And heaven must still increase whilst *Cæsar* reigns.
Creech.

B Y

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By explaining this passage a little, I shall, I hope, satisfy the reader, that none but *Augustus Caesar* can be meant here. The Poet vainly argues the power of man, to comprehend what passes in heaven, because he can even make Gods. His meaning is, *Caesar*, or the Emperor has lately deified his father, and thereby augmented the number of the Gods: Or, as an Astronomer and Poet, he attributes the new star, which was said to appear soon after *Julius's* death, to that great man, as *Virgil* and *Ovid* had done before him. This circumstance limits it entirely to the person of *Augustus*. In another place the author ingeniously complements this prince on his sharing the government of the World with *Jupiter*. Speaking of the milky way, he puts the question, Whether those heaps of stars there, are not the souls of departed Heroes. The thought at least is poetical.

*Et Cato fortuna Victor, matrisque sub armis
Miles Agrippa sua. Venerisque ab Origine proles
Julia descendit Cælo, Cælumque replevit,
Quod regit Augustus socio per signa Tonante
Cernit & in cœtu Divum magnumque Quirinum.*
L. i. v. 794.

With fortune's Conqueror, great *Cato* shine,
But *Venus Julian* race who drew their rise
From heav'n; return again and fill the skies:
Where great *Augustus* with his partner *Jove*
Presides, and views his father fix'd above;
Quirinus joins him, and is pleas'd to see
The *Cæsars* grow Rome's founders more than he. *Creech.*

IN another passage he alludes to the shutting up the temple of *Fanus*.

*Sed satis hoc fatis fuerit : Jam bella quiescant,
Atque adamanteis discordia cincta catenis
Æternos habeat franos in carcere clausa.
Sit pater invictus patria, sit Roma sub illo,
Cumque deum Cælo dederit non quarat in illo.*

L. i. v. 919.

Let

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Let this, O fates, suffice; let discord cease,
And raging tumults be confin'd in peace.
Let *Cæsar* triumph, let the world obey,
And long let *Rome* be happy in his sway.
Long have him here, and when he shall bestow
A God on heav'n, enjoy his aid below. *Creech.*

THESE passages, I think, evidently prove that he wrote under *Augustus*; and the following line is thought an argument of his living at *Rome*.

Qua genitus cum fratre Remus hanc condidit urbem.
L. 4. v. 893.

But what he has said of the isle of *Rhodes*, determines the time of his writing to the latter end of *Augustus's* reign.

*Virginæ sub casta felix terraque marique
Es Rhodos, hospitium recturi principis orbem.
Tuque domus vere solis, cui tota sacrata es
Cum caperes lumen magni sub Cæsare mundi.*
L. IV. v. 763.

In happy *Rhodes* the gentle maid's ador'd,
Rhodes the retirement of our future Lord:
Blest island, truly sacred to the sun,
E'er since in thee the glorious *Cæsar* shone:
The world's great light, whom with expecting eyes
Mankind desires, and longs to see him rise. *Creech.*

According to *V. Paterculus*, *Tiberius* retir'd to *Rhodes* when *C. Antistius*, and *L. Balbus* were consuls, and continued there seven years. The defeat of *Varus* happened three years after *Tiberius's* return: Yet this last circumstance is mentioned in the first, and the other in Book IV. These, say the Critics, are irreconcilable together: But it is easy to do it, I think, provided we suppose that the passage of *Tiberius's* being at *Rhodes*, was inserted at the first composing of the work, and the other of *Varus's* overthrow, on the revising the whole afterwards. Not but

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but that, on the other hand, it seems as if there was a defect in the poem of *Manilius*; for he does not go through with the account of the planets, but breaks off without resuming the subject; at least that part seems to have wanted his last hand. However, from this passage we may plainly infer, he did not live till *Tiberius's* coming to the Empire. And another proof may be gathered from the poets praying fortune to favour his undertaking, and grant him a long life to go through with so great a task; which argues his being but young when he wrote it.

— *Faveat magno fortuna labori
Annoſa, & molli contingat vita ſenecta,
Ut poſſim rerum tantas emergere moles.* Lib. 1.

Assist me, Fortune, and improve my thought,
Equal my mind to my vast task, prolong
My life in ease, smooth as my flowing song. *Creech.*

His character is also called in question by the Critics: Some look upon him as a great mathematician, others as a good poet; and some reckon him but indifferent either way: In general his stile is pure, and worthy the Augustan age, which did not a little prevail with some good Judges to place him in that time. He glories, in his Exordium, that he is the first Roman that ever wrote on this subject.

— *Primusque novis Heliconæ movere
Cantibus, & viridi nutantes vertice sylvas
Hospita sacra ferens, nulli memorata priorum.*
Lib. 1. v. 4.

What yet the Muses groves ne'er heard I sing,
And bring unusual offerings to their spring! *Creech.*

Now this assertion of the poet's could by no means be true, if MANILIUS was not a Roman, and did not live under *Augustus*. For if he were of *Theodosius's* time, *Julius Firmicus* had preceeded him on this head, which he treated of in prose under *Constantine*: If he were not a
Ro,

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Roman, the assertion would be equally false; *Aratus* and others among the Greeks, having preceeded him in their astronomical writings. Another passage to our purpose is in Book II, where having mentioned the various subjects chosen by different writers, he again loudly asserts his own merit in having imitated no one. The poet thus elegantly expresses himself on this occasion.

*Integra quaramus vorantes prata per herbas,
Undamque occultis meditantem murmur in antris;
Quam neque durato gustarint ore volucres,
Ipse nec Æthereo Phæbus libaverit igne.
Nosira loquar: nulli vatium debemus orsa.
Nec furtum, sed opus veniet; soloque volamus
In cælum curru: Private pellimus undas.*

L. 2. v. 54.

I seek new Springs, which roul refreshing waves
Through plains untrod, and purl in hidden caves
Kept pure for me; which birds did ne'er profane,
And thirsty *Phæbus* oft has sought in vain.
My verse shall be my own, not stol'n but wrought;
Mine, not the labour of another's thought.
My vessel's trimm'd, tho' never launch'd before;
I spread my sails, and boldly leave the shore. *Creech.*

To recommend his work, the author artfully insinuates the difficulty of writing well on so barren a subject, by shewing the ease of doing it on a fine one.

— *Facile est ventis dare vela secundis,
Facundumque solum varias agitare per artes;
Auroque atque ebori decus addere, cum rudis ipsa
Materies niteat. Speciosis condere rebus
Carmina vulgatum est opus & componere simplex.*
Ibid.

On specious subjects common wits compose,
For where the matter takes, the fancy flows;
And ev'ry vulgar author writes with ease,
Secure of credit, where the themes can please. *Creech.*
From

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From Book 6. where he speaks of Fate, it is evident MANILIUS was a Stoic. The introduction to this Book, *On the vanity of human desires*, has a fine moral.

*Quid tam sollicitis vitam consumimus annis,
Torquemurque metu cacaque cupidine rerum ?
Æternisque senes curis, dum quarimus ærum
Perdimus, & nullo votorum fine beati
Victuros agimus semper, nec vivimus unquam ?
Pauperiorque bonis quisque est, quo plura requirit.
Nec, quod habet, numerat: Tantum quod non ha-
bet, optat.*

*Cumque sui parvos usus natura reposcat,
Materiam struimus magna per vota ruina,
Luxuriamque lucris emimus, luxuque rapinas ;
Et summum census pretium est, effundere censum.*

L. 4. v. 1.

Why should our time run out in uselefs years,
Of anxious troubles and tormenting fears,
Vain to pursue, yet eager to possess ?
With no success, and no advantage crown'd,
Why should we still tread on th' unfinish'd ground ?
Grown grey in cares pursue the senseless strife,
And seeking how to live, consume a life :
The more we have, the meaner is our store :
The unenjoying craving wretch is poor.
But heav'n is kind, with bounteous hand it grants
A fit supply for nature's sober wants :
She asks not much, yet men press blindly on,
And heap up more, to be the more undone :
By luxury they rapine's force maintain,
What this scrapes up, flows out in that again.
And to be squander'd, or to raise debate,
Is the great only use of an estate.

Creech.

I shall add another excellent passage out of the same book,
On the compass of human knowledge.

— *Quid*

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— *Quid mirum noscere mundum
Si homines possunt, quibus est & mundus in ipsis ?
Exemplumque dei qui que est in imagine parva.*

Lib. 4. ver. 893.

Then who can wonder that the world is known
So well by man, since he himself is one ?
The same composurè in his form is shew'd,
And man's the little image of the God. *Creech.*

What has been quoted from his *astronomics*, will, I believe, be sufficient to incline the reader to allow MANILIUS a place in the number of good poets; especially considering his genius was confined by the subject, from striking out into those beauties, which are the very soul of poetry; in which however he seems to be as great a master as in Philosophy. Perhaps the desire of going out of the common road, and performing something new, might be one of the principal motives of his undertaking such a subject: Not but that the heathen world in general, and the Romans as much as any, were addicted to Astrology, which is the principal subject of the poem; and therefore no doubt it met with a very favourable reception from the publick: Besides, *Augustus* himself was not a little superstitious that way; and I believe *Donatus* observing it, has thereon founded his fabulous account of *Virgil's* introduction to that Prince.

T H E



THE
L I F E
O F
L U C A N.



ARCUS ANNÆUS LUCANUS, a native of *Corduba* in *Spain*, was born the xith of *November*, in the second consulship of *Caligula*, about the year of *Christ* xxxvii. His family had been transplanted from *Italy* to *Spain* a considerable time before, and possess'd of several dignities and employments in that flourishing province of the *Roman* Empire. His father, *Annaeus Mela*, was a *Roman* Knight, and a man of distinguished merit and interest in his country, and not less esteemed for being brother to *Seneca* the Philosopher: He married *Caja Acilia*, the daughter of *Acilius Lucanus*, a celebrated Orator, from whom our Author took his name. We have the same story of *Lucan*, that is told of *Hesiod*, viz. That Bees surrounded his cradle, and several settled on his lips; which, however

however fabulous, is nevertheless a proof of the regard the ancients had for this Poet. His father carry'd him to Rome when he was but eight months old, which makes it seem strange, that some Critics in censuring his style, as corrupted and degenerating from the purity of the Augustan age, should partly attribute it to his being a *Spaniard*, since his education from his first infancy was altogether *Roman*. Discovering a very promising disposition as he grew up, his parents took all possible care to cultivate it betimes, and gave him *Palamon*, the learned grammarian, for his master in the languages, and *Flavius Virginus* for Oratory, who was the most eloquent Rhetorician of his time. He afterwards studied Philosophy under *Cornutus*, a famous Stoic Philosopher, and a person of excellent virtue and great learning.

HAVING such good opportunities of advancing in his studies, he soon made a Progress, not only answerable, but above all expectation; and declaimed frequently both in Greek and Latin, when he was but fourteen years of age. Among many others that studied under the same masters, were *A. Persius*, and *Saleius Bassus*, for whom he had an extraordinary value and affection, and did them many good offices by his interest at court. It is said he finished his studies at *Athens*, from whence he was soon sent for by his Uncle *Seneca*, who then made the greatest figure, for his probity, wit, and learning, and I may say for his riches, of any man at *Rome*. Being then *Nero's* Tutor, *Lucan* through his means, quickly insinuated himself into that Prince's favour; to which, his own merit, when known, was a sufficient recommendation. By their joint interest, he was made *Quæstor* before he was of age to bear that office; during the exercise of which, he exhibited to the publick a magnificent shew of Gladiators, at a great expence. Not long after, being by a general consent admitted a member of the college of *Augurs*, he composed some verses in honour of *Nero* his patron on that occasion.

IN this affluence of fortune and credit with his Prince, he married *Polla Argentaria*, the daughter of a *Roman* Senator. She was a Lady of much wit and learning, as well

well as beauty. *Statius* has given her this fine character in his *Genethliacon Lucani*, or Poem which he composed in honour of the anniversary of our Author's birth-day at her request; for she survived him many years: She excelled according to that writer,

*Forma, simplicitate, Comitatus,
Censu, sanguine, gratia, decore.*

BUT through *Nero's* envy, and his own ambition, he soon fell from this prosperous condition into disgrace. That Prince growing weary of following the wholesome counsels of *Burrhus* and *Seneca*, and giving a loose to flattery, and the corrupt bent of his own inclinations, forgot the character of Emperor and Father of his Country, extravagantly affecting those of Player, Musician, and Poet; and though his merit was small in any of those respects, he could bear no rival, nor endure any competitor for the Laurel.

THIS made him grow jealous of *LUCAN*, whose rising fame swell'd his breast with envy; which *LUCAN*, fond of praise, still encreased, till at length he utterly forfeited his master's favour, by openly contending with him for the prize of Poetry. At the time of the celebration of the *Quinquennalia*, *Nero* had ordered *Clivius Ruffus* to proclaim, that he (*Nero*) intended next day to recite the story of *Niobe* in a Poem of his own composing. A great company attending to honour the imperial Poet, he accordingly recited it with great Applause, and, little expecting any concurrent, thought himself secure of the prize; when *LUCAN*, fired with indignation that so poor a piece should be thus rewarded, and spurred on by his ambition, which he resolved to gratify, though he should incur the Prince's displeasure, boldly stood up, and repeating a poem on the fable of *Orpheus*, demanded and obtained the prize. It argued at the same time some remains of a publick spirit in the judges, who durst reward merit, when their Emperor contended for the Laurel. As this action carries an air of presumption in it, it will be some justification of our Author's vanity, to give the reader a specimen of *Nero's* bombast, as quoted by *Persius* in his first satire.

Torva

*Torva Mimalloneis implerunt cornua bombis,
Et raptum vitulo caput ablatura superbo
Bassaris, & lyncem Menas flexura Corymbis
Evion ingeminat; raparabilis adsonat Echo.*

Their crooked horns the Mimallonian crew
With blasts inspir'd ; and *Bassaris* who flew
The scornful calf, with sword advanc'd on high,
Made from his neck, his haughty head to fly.
And *Menas* when with ivy bridles bound,
She led the spotted Lynx, then *Evion* rung around,
Evion from woods and floods repairing Echo's sound.

Dryden.

THIS action ruined LUCAN with that Prince, who to punish his insolence, forbad him to repeat any of his compositions in public hereafter. There could not be a greater mortification to one ambitious of fame as LUCAN was, than this prohibition, though *Nero* carried his resentment yet farther, and took all occasions of ridiculing and depreciating him and his works. And now this Emperor having daily rendred himself more odious to the world by his tyranny and monstrous vices, several persons of distinction, with *Piso* at their head, entered into a conspiracy against him, intending to rid the world of such a plague, and restore their country's Liberty. LUCAN had personal provocations enough to join with them ; besides which, the generous principle of virtue and liberty he had imbibed, and has so nobly discovered throughout the *Pharsalia*, were sufficient motives to incline him to lend his helping hand to so public-spirited a design. *Tacitus* in his account of this conspiracy, according to his usual way, interpreting every thing in the severest manner, expressly tells us, that the ill treatment he had received from *Nero*, had provoked him to it ; and not content with that, he further adds, that LUCAN being tortured, and put to the question, accused his mother of being in the plot. But such as will more narrowly look into LUCAN's character, will find him to have been a person of too steady a virtue, to be guilty of so weak and base an action. It seems most probable, this story of LUCAN's accusing his mother, might be

be raised by the Tyrant's party, who, the more to depreciate his character, were resolved to leave this as a lasting blot upon his Memory.

BEING condemned to die, but allowed to choose his own death, he went into a hot bath, and there had his veins opened by a physician. He behaved himself with uncommon cheerfulness and tranquillity, though cut off in the flower of his age, and in the full pursuit of glory. At length, perceiving that he grew faint, through the great effusion of blood, he is said to have expired, repeating the following lines out of the *Pharsalia*.

*Sanguis erant lachryma, quaecunque foramina novis
Humor, ab his largus manat cruor, ora redundant,
Et patula nares; sudor rubet: omnia plenis
Membra fluunt venis, totum est pro vulnere corpus.*

Lib. 9.

Now the warm blood at once from every part
Ran purple poison down, and drain'd the fainting
heart.

Blood falls for tears, and o'er his mournful face
The ruddy drops their tainted passage trace.
Where'er the liquid juices find a way,
There streams of blood, there crimson rivers stray.
His mouth and gushing nostrils pour a flood,
And ev'n the pores ouze out the trickling blood:
In the red deluge all the parts lie drown'd,
And the whole body seems one bleeding wound.

Rowe.

THE other passage, said to have been repeated by him on this melancholly occasion, is as follows:

*Scinditur avulsus; nec sicut vulnere sanguis
Emicuit lentus; ruptis cadit undique venis,
Discursusque anima diversa in membra meantis
Interceptus aquis, nullius vita perempti
Est tanta dimissa via. ———*

L. 3. v. 638.

— A

— A funder flew the man.

No fingle wound the gaping rupture feems,
Where trickling crimfon wells in flender freams ;
But from an op'ning horrible and wide,
A thoufand veffels pour the burfting tide.
At once the winding channels courfe was broke,
Where wandering life her mazy journey took.
At once the currents all forgot their way,
And loft their purple in the azure fea. Rowe.

HE died the 30th of *April*, at 27 years of age, in the confulship of *Atticus Veflinus*, and *Nerva Syllanus*. His untimely death has hardly left us room to judge what he might have been, though it is evident he was born with an extraordinary Genius for poetry. In his youth he wrote feveral Poems, fome of which are mentioned by Authors; as that about the combat of *Hector* and *Achilles*, which he is faid to have written at twelve years of age; the fable of *Orpheus*; a Poem on the dreadful fire that happened at *Rome*, in which fome fay he feverely glanced at *Nero*, who was reputed the caufe of it, though the innocent converts to Chriftianity fuffered for it; one in praife of the Laurel; and another of his wife. We find mention made likewise of fome books of *Saturnalia*; ten books of *Mifcellanies*; an imperfect Tragedy of *Medea*; and a Poem on the burning of *Troy*. Some have added to thefe, the Panegyric to *Calphurnius Pifo*, which is yet extant; but it is rejected by moft Commentators, who look upon it as a work of a much later age. Thefe, with his *Pharfalia*, are reckoned up by *Statius*, as compofed by LUCAN, at an age when *Virgil* had not yet written his *Culex*.

*Hæc primo juvenis canis fub Ævo,
Ante annos Culicis Maroniani.*

IN the fame place that writer gives him the preference to all the Latin Poets, except *Virgil*.

*Cedet mufa rudis ferocis Enni,
Et docti furor arduus Lucreti,*

N

Et

*Et qui per freta duxit Argonautas,
Et qui corpora prima transfigurat.
Quin majus loquor, ipsa te Latinis
Æneis venerabitur canentem.*

OF the aforesaid Poems, we have only the Titles left except the *Pharsalia*; but whatever their merit might be, they certainly were only preparatory to the *Pharsalia*; 'twas on this he staked his reputation, and promised himself an immortality from it. The most celebrated passage of this kind, is in the 9th Book as follows:

*O sacer & magnus Vatum labor, omnia fato
Eripis, & populis donas mortalibus ævum.
Invidia sacra, Cæsar, ne tangere fama;
Nam si quid Latii fas est promittere Musis,
Quantum Smyrnæi durabunt vatis honores
Venturi me teque legent: Pharsalia nostra
Vivet, & a nullo tenebris damnabitur ævo.*

O poetry divine! oh sacred song,
To thee bright fame and length of days belong;
Thou Goddess, thou eternity canst give,
And bid secure the mortal Heroe live.
Nor, *Cæsar*, thou disdain that I rehearse
Thee and thy wars in no ignoble verse;
Since if in ought the *Latian* muse excel
Thy name and mine immortal I foretel;
Eternity our labours shall reward,
And *LUCAN* flourish like the *Gracian* Bard;
My numbers shall to latest times convey
The Tyrant *Cæsar*, and *Pharsalia's* day.

Rocue.

As this poem is not built on the plan of *Homer* or *Virgil*, the Criticks have given themselves a great deal of needless trouble, in comparing their way of executing the design of their's with that of the *Pharsalia*; thereby making it an Epic instead of a narrative historical Poem. This kind of Poetry was made use of by the wise men in all ages and among most civilized nations, before the regularity of the Epic was thought of; the history of most na-

tions,

tions, being at first written in verse, whereby they were better imprinted in the minds of men, who were thus excited to imitate the brave actions of their ancestors, or taught to avoid their failings; it being usual to recite some of the most remarkable passages at their feasts and entertainments; and in this manner it seems, if we may credit the account, *Homer* rehearsed his *Iliad* and *Odysee*. But to insist no farther on the excellency and antiquity of narrative Poetry: I shall proceed to observe, that the *Pharsalia* not being a fable founded on some probable story, which is essential to the Epic Poem, but a remarkable piece of history related in verse, it required a very different conduct in the execution; and though it might admit of some ornaments, it absolutely excluded all such fiction, as was any way contrary to the matter of fact in the historical narration.

SETTING therefore all disputes with the Critics aside, let us examine the Poem in the light we have now placed it, and see if it does not deserve the name of an excellent work. The subject he has chosen, is the noblest of any in the *Roman* Story, and best deserved the pen of a writer that had such generous principles of Liberty; and no time could be more proper for it to appear in, than that, wherein, through the weakness or tyranny of its late Princes, the *Roman* Empire was threatned with ruin and decay, and a young Prince then held the reins of government, who promised to restore the moderation and clemency of *Augustus*, and at least leave some glimpse of Liberty: For when LUCAN first set about his *Pharsalia*, *Nero* governing under the direction of *Burrhus* and *Seneca*, which he did the first five years of his reign, behaved like an excellent Prince, and one that promised to be the father of his Country. Such an opportunity was to be improved, and the minds of men, corrupted by habitual flattery and servile submission, to be awakned to a generous sense of their former Liberty under the Commonwealth, and brought to an aversion to slavish principles, by having afresh presented to their view, the now almost forgotten steps that were taken to ruin the Commonwealth, by introducing luxury into it, and seeing in the

bright character of *Cato*, the true spirit of their virtuous and frugal Ancestors.

THIS was a design worthy of a *Roman* Poet, and we shall find upon examination, that he has not unsuccessfully executed it. As his years were not equal to those of *Virgil* when he composed his *Pastorals*, much less when he corrected his *Æneid*, so neither can we expect his judgment should always bear a parallel with the other's. But should the Poet be found sometimes a little too far carried by the fire of his vast imagination, the imperfect state his hasty death left it in, will atone for it.

THEY that accuse him for making his Exordium too pompous and solemn, have done so because they placed it in a wrong light: For though it is not prudent for a Poet to magnify a work of his own invention, least the Reader should say with *Horace*,

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu ? De Art. Poet.

Yet it is very allowable for the writer of a narrative Poem, to engage the Reader's attention to his relation; since he is tyed down to matter of fact, which in *LUCAN*'s case was most notorious; for none of his Readers could be so ignorant, as not to be acquainted with the general circumstances of so extraordinary a revolution, as the subversion of the *Roman* Empire. This shews the injustice of the Charge against *LUCAN*, because it is plain that in this respect he could not impose on his reader, or raise a false expectation, as might happen in an Epic Poem. Thus it will appear, that *Virgil*'s discretion in plainly mentioning *Æneas*'s coming into *Italy* in his Exordium, and *LUCAN*'s Art in describing the fatal consequences of the civil war, are both proper to their method and design.

As to what is objected by some to his invocation of *Nero*, this may be said in his justification, that he seems to have composed, as we have already observed, the former part of his *Pharsalia*, within the first five years of that Prince's reign, when he acted like a Prince that was sent to be a blessing to his subjects: For *LUCAN* seems, by the whole tenor of his Poem, to be a man of too just Principles, to flatter such a monster, as he afterwards proved.

proved. But when we have made this apology, we cannot absolutely excuse it from gross flattery in some lines; as where he does not scruple to say,

*Multum Roma tamen debet civilibus armis,
Quod tibi res acta est* ———

Lib. I.

Vast are the thanks thy grateful Rome shou'd pay
To wars, which usher'd in thy grateful sway. Rowe.

THAT part is more tolerable, where he invokes him instead of *Apollo* or the *Muses*; his being a *Roman* song.

*Sed mihi jam Numen; nec si te pectore vates
Accipiam, Cyrrhea velim secreta moventem
Sollicitare Deum, Bacchumque avertere Nyssa.
Tu satis ad dandas Romana in carmina vires.*

Lib. I.

To me thy present Godhead stands confest,
O let thy sacred Fury fire my breast!
So thou vouchsafe to hear, let *Phœbus* dwell
Still uninvo'd in *Cyrrha's* mystic cell.
By me uncalled let sprightly *Bacchus* reign,
And lead the dance on *Indian Nyssa's* plain.
To thee, O *Cæsar*, all my Vows belong;
Do thou alone inspire the *Roman* song.

Rowe.

It is allowed, that setting aside some few poetical ornaments in the work, he has made a faithful relation of all the considerable circumstances attending the civil war. That of *Sextus's* consulting *Erichtho*, is what has been objected to, as a gross deviation from truth. Indeed we find no mention of it made in History; but it is pretty well known those times were superstitious enough to do such a thing, and that is sufficient authority for the Poet to insert it: For, as was observed before, though he is obliged not to alter the truth of Matters of fact, it is lawful to insert such Probabilities to adorn and beautify the work, as do not contradict the truth of the whole.

THE principal characters are those of *Pompey* and *Cæsar*, *Cato* and *Brutus*. Those of the two former are artfully drawn.

drawn, though the latter is a little aggravated ; for he has not distinguished the generous and merciful man in *Caesar*, from the destroyer of his country's liberty. The comparisons annexed finely illustrate those characters. That of *Pompey* is as follows.

— *Alter, urgentibus annis*
In senium, longoque toga tranquillior usu,
Dedidicit jam pace ducem : famaue petitor,
Multa dare in vulgus : totus popularibus auris
Impelli, plausuque sui gaudere theatri :
Nec reparare novas vires, multumque priori
Credere fortuna ; stat magni nominis umbra.
Qualis frugifero quercus sublimis in agro,
Exuvias veteres populi, sacrataque gestans
Dona ducum : nec jam validis radicibus harena
Pondere fixa suo est : nudosque per aera ramos
Effundens, trunco non frondibus efficit umbram.
At quamvis primo nutet casura sub Euro,
Tot circum Silva firmo se robore tollant,
Sola tamen colitur. —

Lib. i.

Nor came the Rivals equal to the field,
 One to increasing years began to yield.
 Old age came creeping in the peaceful gown,
 And civil functions weigh'd the soldier down :
 Disus'd to arms, he turn'd him to the laws,
 And pleas'd himself with popular applause.
 With gifts and liberal bounty sought for fame,
 And lov'd to hear the vulgar shout his name.
 In his own theatre rejoic'd to sit
 Amidst the noisy praises of the Pit.
 Careless of future ills, that might betide,
 No aid he sought to prop his falling side,
 But on his former fortune much rely'd.
 Still seem'd he to possess and fill his place,
 And stood the shadow of what once he was.
 So in the field with *Ceres'* bounty spread,
 Uprears some antient oak his rev'rend head ;
 Chaplets and sacred gifts his boughs adorn,
 And spoils of war by mighty Heroes worn.

But

But the first vigor of his Root now gone,
He stands dependant on his weight alone:
All bare his naked branches are display'd,
And with his breathless trunk he forms a shade.
Yet though the winds his ruin daily threat,
As ev'ry blast would heave him from his seat;
Though thousands fairer trees the field supplies,
That rich in youthful verdure round him rise;
Fix'd in his antient state he yields to none,
And wears the honours of the grove alone. *Rowe.*

CÆSAR's character follows thus; but is a little blackened, the Author's aim being rather to shew the Invader of his country, than the Heroe.

——— *Sed non in Casare tantum*
Nomen erat, nec fama ducis: sed nescia virtus
Stare loco: solusque pudor non vincere bello.
Acer & indomitus; quo spes, quoque ira vocasset
Ferre manum, & nunquam temerando parcere ferro.
Successus urgere suos: instare favori
Numinis, impellens quicquid sibi summa petenti
Obstaret; gaudensque viam fecisse ruina.
Qualiter expressum ventis per nubila fulmen
Ætheris impulsu sonitu, mundique fragore
Emicuit, rupitque diem, populosque paventes
Terruit, obliqua prestringens lumina flamma:
In sua templa furit: nullaue exire vetante
Materia, magnamque cadens magnamque revertens
Dat stragem late, sparsosque recolligit ignes. Lib. 1.

But Caesar's greatness, and his strength was more
Than past renown and antiquated pow'r.
'Twas not the fame of what he once had been,
Or tales in old records and annals seen;
But 'twas a valour restless, unconfin'd,
Which no success could fate, nor limits bind:
'Twas shame, a soldier's shame untaught to yield,
That blush'd for nothing but an ill fought field;
Fierce in his hopes he was, nor knew to stay,
Where vengeance or ambition led the way.

Still prodigal of war whene'er withstood,
 Nor spar'd to stain the guilty sword with blood.
 Urging advantage, he improv'd all odds,
 And made the most of Fortune and the Gods:
 Pleas'd to o'erturn whate'er withheld his prize,
 And saw the ruin with rejoicing Eyes.
 Such, while earth trembles, and heav'n thunders loud,
 Darts the swift Light'ning from the rending cloud;
 Fierce through the day it breaks, and in its flight
 The dreadful blast confounds the gazer's sight;
 Refittless in its course delights to rove,
 And cleaves the temples of its master *Jove*.
 Alike where'er it passes or returns,
 With equal rage the fell destroyer burns:
 Then with a whirl full in its strength retires,
 And recollects the force of all its scatter'd fires. *Rowe.*

His restless ambition is most severely pointed out in these lines, which compleat his character:

—— *Cæsar, in omnia præceps,
 Nil actum credens dum quid superesset agendum,
 Instat atrox, & adhuc quamvis possederit omnem
 Italiam, extremo sedeat quod littore Magnus,
 Communem tamen esse dolet* ——

Lib. 1.

Cæsar with Empire fir'd, and vast desires,
 To all, and nothing less than all, aspires:
 He reckons not the past, while ought remain'd
 Great to be done, or mighty to be gain'd.
 Though *Italy* obey his wide command,
 Though *Pompey* linger on the farthest strand,
 He grieves to think they tread one common land.

Rowe.

IN the second Book, *Cato's* character is set in an extraordinary light, which is still more remarkable for that awful regard paid him by *Brutus*, when he endeavours to dissuade him from joining with either side in the civil war.

— *Nimium*

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— *Nimium placet ipse, Catoni*
Si bellum civile placet —
 — *Toto jam liber in orbe*
Solus Casar erit —

Lib. 2.

Casar shall hear with joy that thou art join'd
 With fighting factions to disturb mankind;
 Though sworn his foe, he shall applaud thy choice,
 And think his wicked war approv'd by *Cato's* voice.
 Ev'n *Cato's* self to *Pompey's* yoke must bow,
 And all mankind are slaves but *Casar* now. Rowe.

How like an Oracle does the Poet introduce *Cato's*
 Reply :

Arcano sacras reddit Cato pectore voces. Lib. 2.

———— *Cato* thus exprest
 The sacred councils of his inmost breast. Rowe.

THAT great man, in answer to what *Brutus* had ob-
 jected, gives this excellent reason for his joining with
Pompey :

———— *Me milite vincat;*
Ne sibi se vicisse putet — Lib. 2.

Let him remember I was on his side;
 Nor think he conquer'd for himself alone
 To make the harvest of the war his own;
 Where half the toil was ours. Rowe.

THUS *Brutus*, who before seem'd unconcerned in the
 universal distraction, is, by *Cato's* example, determin'd to
 follow *Pompey*. As this whole passage is very fine, I shall
 present the Reader with some quotations from it. The
 manner, in which *Brutus* addresses his Father-in-law, is
 very nobly described by the Poet.

THE making *Cato's* breath, forsaken Virtue's only re-
 fuge, raises him to so exalted a pitch, that a man of
Brutus's steady virtue, may, without any reproach to
 his

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his Understanding, consult him on so ticklish an occasion.

*Omniſus expulſa terris, olimque fugata
Virtutis jam ſola ſedes, quam turbine nullo
Excutiet fortuna tibi, tu mente labantem
Dirige me, dubium certo tu robore firma.*

Lib. 2.

————— O thou to whom
Forſaken virtue flies as to her home;
Driv'n out, and by an impious age oppreſs'd,
She finds no room on earth, but *Cato's* breſt;
There in her own good man ſhe reigns ſecure,
Fearleſs of vice, or fortune's hoſtile pow'r.
Then teach my ſoul to doubt and error prone,
Teach me a reſolution like thy own.

Rowe.

THE following compariſon, in *Cato's* anſwer to him, finely deſcribes that good man's ſentiments, and pious motives, in reſolving to go to the war.

————— *Ceu morte parentem
Natorum orbatum, longumque producere funus
Ad tumulum jubet ipſe dolor; jubet ignibus atris
Inſeruiſſe manus, conſtructoque aggere buſti
Ipſum atras tenuiſſe faces: Non ante revellar
Exanimem quam te complectar Roma, tuumque
Nomen libertas, & inanem proſequar umbram.*

Lib. 2.

As ſome unhappy Sire by death undone,
Robb'd of his age's joy, his only ſon,
Attends the fun'ral rites with pious care,
To pay his laſt paternal office there:
Takes a ſad pleaſure in the croud to go,
And be himſelf part of the pompous woe;
Then waits 'till, ev'ry ceremony paſt,
His own fond hand may light the pile at laſt.
So fix'd, ſo faithful to thy cauſe, O *Rome*,
With ſuch a conſtancy and love I come,
Reſolv'd for thee and liberty to mourn,
And never, never from your ſides be torn;

Re-

Resolv'd to follow still your common fate,
And on your very names and last remains to wait.

Rowe.

But in the ninth book, LUCAN seems to have surpassed himself. *Labienus* advises *Cato*, now general of the forces in *Africa*, after *Pompey's* overthrow at *Pharsalia*, to consult the famous oracle of *Jupiter Ammon*, on the event of the war. *Cato* disdains the Proposal, and shews him at large the folly of such enquiries: In the midst of his discourse, he proves the absurdity of so doing, from the immensity and omnipresence of the divine Being.

*Estne Dei sedes, nisi terra, & pontus, & aer,
Et coelum, & virtus? superos quid quarimus ultra?
Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris.* Lib. 9.

Is there a place that God would chuse to love
Beyond this earth, the seas, yon heav'n above,
And virtuous minds the noblest throne for *Jove*?
Why seek we farther then? behold around
How all thou seest does with the God abound!
Jove is alike in all, and always to be found. Rowe.

THE last notion of God's dwelling in the minds of virtuous men, is a truly religious and sublime thought, which the Poet had just before clearly hinted, where he introduces *Cato's* answer to *Labienus* in this solemn manner:

*Ille deo plenus, tacita quem mente gerebar,
Effudit dignas adytis è pectore voces.* Lib. 9.

Full of the God that dwelt within his breast,
The Heroe thus his secret mind exprest,
And inborn truths reveal'd, truths which might well
Become ev'n oracles themselves to tell. Rowe.

THE following lines are admirable, and out of the same speech. The doctrine here advanced is built on the Stoic principles, that the souls of men are a part of the Deity, which though grossly expressed, means perhaps

no more than that, being of a spiritual nature they are derived from him, who is the Father of spirits.

*Haremus cuncti superis, temploque tacente
Nil facimus non sponte Dei: nec vocibus ullis
Numen eget: dixitque semel nascentibus auctor
Quicquid scire licet: steriles nec legit arenas
Ut caneret paucis, merisitque hoc pulvere verum.* Lib. 9.

From God deriv'd, to God by nature join'd,
We act the Dictates of his mighty mind:
And though the priests are mute, and temples still,
God never wants a voice to speak his will.
When first we from the teeming womb were brought,
With inborn precepts then our souls were fraught,
And then the maker his new creatures taught,
Canst thou believe the vast eternal mind
Was e'er to *Syrtis* and *Lybian* sands confin'd?
That he would chuse this waste, this barren ground,
To teach the thin inhabitants around,
And leave his truths in wilds and deserts drown'd?

Rowe.

THE following lines with which I shall conclude his character, are an account of his principles, which so much the more deserve our notice, as he put them in practice.

— *Hi mores, hæc duri immota Catonis
Secta fuit, servare modum, finemque tenere,
Naturamque sequi, patriæque impendere vitam;
Nec sibi sed toti genitum se credere mundo.* Lib. 2.

These were the stricter manners of the man,
And this the stubborn course in which they ran;
The golden mean unchanging to pursue,
Constant to keep the purpos'd end in view;
Religiously to follow nature's laws,
And die with pleasure in his country's cause;
To think he was not for himself design'd,
But born to be of use to all mankind.

Rowe.
IT

IT must be confessed, that neither *Homer's* nor *Virgil's* invention has been able to furnish out so fine a character as *Cato's* was in reality. Though it appears *Virgil* had an extraordinary opinion of his virtue, when he makes him in Book 6. giving laws to the blessed: Though some will rather have it spoken of the elder *Cato*.

Secretosque pios his dantem jura Catonem.

IN the beginning of Book 1. we find LUCAN making a remarkable description of the conflagration. It is evident that many of the ancient Philosophers had this notion: The Stoicks adopted it, though *Plato* before them had made mention of it; for he taught, that at certain periods of time, this frame of things was to be destroyed by deluges or conflagrations, according to the increase of the contrary Elements. Some think this was derived by tradition, since there is no accounting for it by the principles of philosophy; others say LUCAN might have drawn it from the Christian doctrines as revealed in *St. Peter's* Epistle, or from the preaching of *St. Paul*, who was at *Rome* about this time. But how then should *Ovid* so exactly hit the same notion, in whose time Christianity was no where taught; he dying some years before our Saviour began to teach it. I shall leave the Reader to determine this point, and give him the passage.

— — — Sic cum compage soluta
 Sacula tot mundi suprema coegerit hora
 Antiquum repetens iterum chaos; omnia mistis
 Sidera sideribus concurrent, ignea pontum
 Astra petent; tellus extendere littora nolet,
 Excutietque fretum; fratri contraria Phœbe,
 Ibit, & obliquum bigas agitare per orbem
 Indignata diem poscet sibi: totaque discors
 Machina divulsi turbabit fœdera mundi.

Lib. i.

So shall one hour at last this globe controul,
 Break up the vast machine, dissolve the whole,
 And time no more through measur'd ages roll.

}
 Then

Then *Chaos* hoar shall seize his former right,
 And reign with Anarchy and eldest Night;
 The starry Lamps shall combat in the sky,
 And lost and blended in each other die.
 Quench'd in the deep, the heav'nly fires shall fall;
 And ocean cast abroad o'erspread the Ball.
 The Moon no more her well known course shall run,
 But rise from western waves and meet the Sun;
 Ungovern'd shall she quit her ancient sway,
 Her self ambitious to supply the Day:
 Confusion wild shall all around be hurl'd,
 And discord and disorder tear the world.

Rowe.

I SHALL add another passage out of the seventh Book, that the reader, by tacking them together, may more compleatly see the Author's notion, and better judge how far it agrees with our's from Revelation.

*Hos, Caesar, populos, si nunc non ufferit ignis,
 Uret cum terris, uret cum Gurgite ponti.
 Communis mundo superest rogos, ossibus astra
 Misturus* —————

Lib. 7.

Though now thy cruelty denies a grave,
 These and the world one common lot shall have:
 One last appointed flame by Fate's decree
 Shall waft yon azure Heav'n, this Earth and Sea;
 Shall knead the dead up in one mingled mass,
 Where Stars and they shall undistinguish'd pass.

SINCE it is our design to make the Reader perfectly acquainted with the true character of the several Poets, we must be allowed sometimes, not only to make such quotations as are remarkably excellent, but others also; which, though they may fall short of perfection, must be taken notice of, since they shew the writer's spirit and genius. Our Author peculiarly affects refining on common thoughts, and sprightly turns, as indeed did most of the Stoics. Thus the *Pharsalia* abounds with many that are poor and unseasonable, and not suitable to the dignity of his subject; he is also dogmatical, and frequently affects

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to make an ostentation of his learning; as in the Episode of *Erichtho*, and the account of the *Thessalian* Sorceresses, and that of the serpents and venemous creatures in *Africa*. An instance of an unseasonable turn, is the Apostrophe to the *Parthians*, in the beginning of the first Book, alluding to the death of *M. Crassus* the Triumvir.

*Plus illa vobis acie, quam creditis, actum est
Arsacida; bellum victis civile dedistis.*

Lib. 1.

Ye fierce *Arsacida*, ye foes of *Rome*
Now triumph, you have more than overcome.
The vanquish'd felt your victory from far,
And from that field receiv'd their civil war. *Rowe.*

A TRIFLING turn is such as the following, when the Poet, after having nobly described the great consternation of all in *Rome*, upon *Caesar's* crossing the *Rubicon*, excuses it upon the departure of *Pompey*, their Guardian and Protector. A good writer should not have leisure to attend to such an Epigrammatic turn, much less to conclude a fine description with it.

Pompeio fugiente timent —————

Lib. 1.

Yet one excuse absolves the pannic dread,
The vulgar justly fear'd when *Pompey* fled. *Rowe.*

BUT he has made ample amends for this trifling in the end of this book, where he happily introduces a frantick Matron, prophetically describing the miseries of the war, and among others, its fatal period in the death of *Pompey*. Such a plain anticipation you will say is a great fault in Epic Poetry; but in the Narrative or Historical, as the *Pharsalia*, it is a beauty: For the whole story being already universally known, the ingenuity of thus representing that catastrophe in different ways, and placing it in several lights before you come to it, makes the reader more penetrated with concern, and more attentive when it really comes afterwards to be acted.

Qua

*Qua diversa feror ? primos me ducis in ortus,
Qua mare Lagei mutatur Gurgite Nili !
Hunc ego fluminea deformis truncus arena
Qui jacet agnosco —*

Lib. 1.

Again I fly, I seek the rising day,
Where Nile's Egyptian waters take their way ;
I see, I know upon the guilty shore
The Heroe's headless Corps besmear'd with gore.

Rowe.

BUT he refines too much upon the thought, where he attributes it to the favour of the Gods, that Pompey was murdered in Ægypt, and not in Italy.

*Non quia te superi patrio privare sepulchro
Maluerint, Pharia busto damnantur arena ;
Parcitur Hesperia, procul hoc ut in orbe remoto.
Abscondat fortuna nefas, Romanaque tellus
Immaculata sui servetur imagine Magni*

Lib. 4.

Nor think the Gods a death so distant doom,
To rob thy ashes of an urn in Rome ;
But fortune fav'rably remov'd the crime,
And forc'd, the guilt, on Ægypt's cursed clime:
The pitying Pow'rs to Italy were good.
And sav'd her from the stain of Pompey's blood.

Rowe.

HAVING made mention of the unparalleled bravery of Scava, that withstood a whole party of Pompey's men, his imagination takes fire on this hint, and the Poet cannot leave the subject 'till it is quite exhausted. It is on these occasions that Virgil shews himself a master, always leaving more for the Reader to conceive than what he expresses. The best of all the thoughts that LUCAN has upon Scava, is this; that instead of a triumph, he had only purchased slavery by his valour.

*Non tu bellorum spoliis ornare tonantis
Templa potes, non tu laeis ululare triumphis ;
Infelix quanta dominum virtute parasti !*

Lib. 5.

But

But now no Roman *Paan* shalt thou sing,
Nor peaceful triumphs to thy country bring.
Nor loudly blest in solemn pomp shalt prove
Through crouding streets to Capitolian *Jove*
The law's defender, and the people's love.
Oh, hapless victor thou, oh vainly brave,
How hast thou fought to make thy self a slave! *Rowe.*

WHEN *Pompey* was advised not to follow *Cæsar* into *Thessaly*, but to return to *Rome*, the Poet makes him refuse it as follows: Though the turn has little in it that deserves that emphasis he has given it.

————— *Victor tibi, Roma, quietem*
Eripiam, qui ne premerent te prælia fugi?
Ah potius, ne quid Bello patiaris in isto,
Te Cæsar putet esse suam —————

Ibid.

I fled to bid my country's sorrow cease,
And shall my victories invade her peace?
Let her but safe and free from arms remain,
And *Cæsar* still shall think she wears his chain.

Now we are examining his turns of thought, it may divert the reader to take notice of that celebrated one, so much censured by *Bouhours*, for its false brightness. The line in question is as follows, and taken out of the first Book.

Victrix causa Deis placuit, sed victa Catoni. Lib. 1.

Victorious *Cæsar* by the Gods was crown'd,
By *Cato* was the vanquish'd party own'd. *Rowe.*

WHEN it has been condemned by so great a Critic, it may seem a vain attempt to justify the Author; and it will be naturally expected, that, if I don't immediately give it up, I shall only make some faint apology for it: as, that the young Poet, hurried by the warmth of his imagination, could not omit the fine contrast, that the opposition of the Gods on one side, and *Cato* on the other, seemed to make;

make; that had he lived to correct and compleat the *Pharsalia*, he would have struck out this and many other lines; and that it only belongs to a *Virgil* to think nobly, justly, and naturally at once. I am so far from this, that I am going to shew the Poet did not design to make the opposition between the Gods and *Cato* so great, as the Critics have understood it. It seems plain from the liberty the Heathen Poets took with their Gods on all occasions, that the setting them on one side, and a Man of *Cato's* strict and admired integrity on the other, is not so great an error as *Bouhours* would represent it to be. He cannot help considering it in the same light he should have done, had it been made by a modern Poet, between the supreme Being, and weak fallible man. It is evident, and has been proved by many learned men, that the Heathens applied to their Gods only, to render them happy in mind, body, and estate; that is, to give them good intellectual faculties, health, and riches. Virtue and prudence they owed only to themselves. I shall but quote a line or two from *Horace*, to confirm what I have here advanced.

*Orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano :
Det vitam, det opes, æquum mi animum ipse parabo, &c.
Hæc satis est orare Jovem, qui donat & aufert.*

THIS is more particularly agreeable to the doctrine of the Stoics, of which Sect it is certain *LUCAN* was. If then the Heathens in general, and the Stoics in particular, considered the Gods no other than as a Providence that caused the several changes and revolutions in the seasons, and in states, &c. but had no hand in mending the heart or directing the understanding; it is highly probable, that *LUCAN*, when he would speak as a Poet, and agreeable to the common notion, meant no more by this opposing *Cato* to the Gods, than that Fortune favoured the worst side, when right and justice was on the other; and that *Cato* embraced the latter, though victory and success should attend the former. Besides, when *LUCAN* had a mind to express his own private
and

and more philosophical sentiments of the Deity, we have already shewn he knew better.

IN general, LUCAN's expression is bold and lively, his sentiments are strong and clear, his fictions probable, and his digressions, though not proper, are always instructive and entertaining. His Orations are close, artful, and manly, and in general so eloquent, that *Quintilian* has ranked him among the best Orators. Indeed he is often too prosaick and declamatory, as if he had frequented the Bar oftner than the Muses, and had rather mount the *Rostrum* than *Parnassus*.

IT is an observation made by some good Critics, that it is no disadvantage to an Historian to have applied himself to Poetry, and I believe the same may hold of the contrary, namely, that the study and Practice of Eloquence will contribute to embellish the Poet's stile. *Ovid* was never reckoned the worse Poet for having been an excellent Orator, nor *Juvenal* for having spent the former part of his life in declaiming. If *Cicero* was a bad Poet, it might be for want of genius and application, rather than his eloquence in prose; and we have no sufficient proofs to shew that *Virgil* was so indifferent an orator as some have represented him to be; and *Silius Italicus's* misfortune seems want of genius, and of an earlier application to Poetry, more than his success at the Bar; without which, perhaps, he had not written so well as he has done, especially if we consider he dedicated only the dregs of life to the Muses service: and *Statius's* bad Prose seems more owing to the affected style of that age, than to his happy versification:

BUT to return to LUCAN, he has so masterly a manner in his descriptions, that you seem rather a spectator than a reader of the several transactions he relates; and he interests you so much by the warmth of his temper, which he communicates to his writings, that you insensibly become a Person concerned, and find yourself engaged on the same side with them, though you had resolved to be indifferent. He is judicious in discovering the secret springs of action, and looks very narrowly into the true motives of human undertakings, discovering their rise in our irregular passions, and how those passions influence
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all our Actions. He is often happy in applying the several parts of Learning to his subject, which he seldom treats with any great delicacy or discretion. But though, in *Strada's* opinion, *Calliope* cannot be said to be LUCAN's inseparable companion, as she is *Virgil's*; yet, according to that Critic, he is conspicuously mounted on the top of *Parnassus*, and manages his *Pegasus* with much dexterity, still keeping tight in the saddle, though he frequently seems in danger of losing it from the many bounds he makes; the natural spirit and metal of that creature increasing, and being animated by the boldness of the rider. Thus far *Strada* in his Prolusions. It is certain, LUCAN had a great natural genius, but wanted application, which had but a small share in the composing, whatever he might design it should have in correcting it. His versification wants the delicacy and harmony of *Virgil's*, but has fire and spirit in it, that transports you. If he has not that solemnity of the other, it is owing to that vigour which hastens his pace: And to return to the Poet's own character, excepting the invocation, I think that he has every where discovered the noble Roman, and the Lover of his Country. And it may be questioned, if the world has not been as great a sufferer by *Nero's* cruelty in this Writer's untimely death, as it is a gainer by *Augustus's* kind preservation of the *Æneid*. For if at an age when *Virgil* had not published a Pastoral, LUCAN has left us so fine a Poem as the *Pharsalia*, we may without derogating from the Prince of the Roman Poets, imagine something not much inferior to the *Æneid*; and therefore as it is, it may justly be said of the *Pharsalia* and this Writer, what has been already quoted from *Statius*,

————— *Ipsa Latinis te
Æneis venerabitur canentem.*



THE
L I F E
O F
P E R S I U S.



PERSIUS FLACCUS was born the 4th of December, *Fabius Persicus* and *Lucius Vitellius* being Consuls, in the 22d year of *Tiberius*, and of *Rome* 787. He was born at *Volaterra*, a Town in *Etruria*, where he continued 'till twelve years; he was then removed to *Rome*, and there pursued his studies under *Palemon* the Grammarian, and *Virginus Flaccus* the Rhetorician. He afterwards applied himself to Philosophy under *Cornutus*, with whom he became acquainted at sixteen, and contracted an intimate friendship with that excellent Man. He was allyed to that unfortunate Gentleman *Patus Thrasea*; the incomparable *Arria*, *Patus*'s wife, being PERSIUS's near relation: With him and *Lucan* our Author kept up a great familiarity, and very much applauded the compositions of the latter at their rehearsal. He was a Man of strict morals;

als; yet his rigid virtue was tempered with a mild and generous disposition. His being trained up in the principles of the Stoic Philosophy, under his friend and master *Cornutus* and others, (the chief of whom were *Claudius Agaturnus* of *Lacedamon*, and *Petronius Aristocrates* of *Magnesia*;) not only influenced his thoughts and behaviour, but gave a strong tincture to all his Writings. He was a Man of extraordinary modesty, and his Person very beautiful; but no quality was more amiable in him, than that peculiar regard, full of duty and affection, which he paid his mother, and his tender love to his sister and other relations. He wrote some things when he was but a youth; and after he had quitted his studies and masters, upon reading *Lucilius's* tenth Book, his inclinations led him very much to the writing Satire. In them he so severely inveighed against the bad Poets of the age, that he has not spared *Nero* himself, as we have observed in the life of *Lucan*. He was of a weak constitution, and troubled with a bad stomach, of which he died in the 29th year of his age, at a country house of his in the *Appian* way, about eighteen miles from *Rome*. He made his mother and his sisters his heirs, and left his library and a sum of money to his friend *Cornutus*. The Philosopher only accepted of the former, which consisted of above seven hundred Books, which was no mean one for a young Gentleman in those times.

PERSIUS wrote but seldom, and it was some time before he regularly applied himself to it: he first made a slight rehearsal of some of his Satires to *Cornutus*; afterwards his friend *Casius Bassus* pressing him to a publication, he committed them to his care for that purpose. His other more juvenile compositions, *Cornutus* persuaded his mother to suppress. As soon as his Satires came out, they were greedily purchased by Persons of the best taste, and universally admired; and his death no less regretted. As to his present works, the learned have been very much divided in their judgment of them, and he has been equally ill treated by the Partizans of *Horace* and *Juvenal*. As a Poet, he is certainly inferior to both; and all *Cassaubon's* endeavours cannot make him equal to either of them as a Satirist; though in virtue and learning he was their

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their superior. Though a professed imitator of *Horace*, he has exceeded him in one respect, but fell short of him in another. His stile is noble, figurative, and poetical, and in general, answerable to the dignity of his Sentiments, which have all the grandure the Stoic Philosophy, when judiciously applied, could give them. The wit and fine ridicule that shine in every page of *Horace's* Satires, he seems almost an utter stranger to, though he professedly imitates him in almost every line; it is but seldom, indeed, that he imitates either his wit or ridicule; and when he does, is most unhappy in the imitation. In short, it was not his province to be witty: There is nothing that I know of that shews more like an attempt that way, than these lines in his first Satire:

*Heic aliquis, cui circum humeros hyacinthina lana est,
Rancidulum quiddam balba de nare locutus,
Phyllidas, Hypsipylas, vatum & plorabile si quid
Eliquat, & tenero supplantat verba palato.
Assensere viri; nunc non cinis ille poeta
Felix? non levior cippus nunc imprimit ossa?
Laudant conviva: nunc non e manibus illis
Nunc non e tumulto, fortunataque favilla
Nascentur viola? ———*

Sat. I.

One clad in purple not to lose his time,
Eats and recites some lamentable rhyme.
Some senseless *Phyllis* in a broken note,
Snuffling at nose, or croaking in his throat.
Then graciously the mellow audience nod,
Is not th' immortal author made a God?
Are not his Manes blest such praise to have?
Lies not the turf more lightly on his grave?
And roses, while his loud applause they sing,
Stand ready from his sepulchre to spring.

Dryden.

That there is something like wit in these lines must be allowed; but it does not shew itself in genteel raillery like *Horace*, but in an insulting sneer. To do him justice, he shines most in recommending virtue and integrity: Here it is that his Satire becomes him; and that

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air of sincerity that discovers itself in his writings, adds a new grace to them. The following lines are a fine instance of this, wherein he seems to have drawn the picture of his own mind.

*Dicite pontifices, in sacro quid facit aurum?
Nempe hoc, quod Veneri donata a virgine pupa.
Quin damus id superis de magna quod dare lance
Non possit magni Messala lippa propago?
Compositum jus fasque animi, sanctosque recessus
Mentis, & incoctum generoso pectus honesto:
Hac cedo ut admoveam templis, & farre litabo.* Sat. 2.

But tell me, Priests, if I may be so bold,
What are the Gods the better for this gold?
The wretch that offers from his wealthy store
These presents, bribes the Gods to give him more.
As maids to *Venus* offer baby-toys,
To bless the marriage bed with girls and boys.
But let us for the Gods a gift prepare,
Which the great Man's great charges cannot bear.
A soul where laws both human and divine,
In practice more than speculation shine:
A genuine virtue of a vigorous kind,
Pure in the last recesses of the mind:
When with such off'ring to the Gods I come;
A cake thus giv'n is worth a hecatomb. *Dryden.*

None but a good man could so strongly represent in one view, all the most important duties of life, as he has done in the following lines:

*Discite O miseri, & causas cognoscite rerum,
Quid sumus, & quidnam victuri gignimur, ordo
Quis datus, aut meta quam mollis flexus, & unde,
Quis modus argento; quid fas optare, quid asper
Utile Nummus habet; patria carisque propinquis
Quantum elargire deceat, quem te deus esse
Jussit, & humana qua parte locatus es in re.* Sat. 3.

Learn,

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Learn wretches, learn the motions of the mind,
 Why you were made, for what you were design'd;
 And the great moral End of human kind. }
 Study thy self, what rank or what degree,
 The wise Creator has ordain'd for thee :
 And all the offices of that estate
 Perform, and with thy prudence guide thy fate :
 Pray justly to be heard, nor more desire
 Than what the decencies of life require :
 What's requisite to spare, and what to spend,
 Learn what thou ow'st thy country and thy friend.
 Dryden.

The extravagance of mankind in demanding riches, health,
 honours, &c. instead of a good life and a good conscience,
 is severely lashed in this passage :

Non tu prece poscis emaci,
 Qua nisi seductis nequeas committere divi,
 At bona pars procerum tacita libabit acerra.
 Haud curvis promptum est, murmurque humilesq; susurros
 Tollere de templis, & aperto vivere voto.
 Mens bona, fama, fides; hac clare, & ut audiat hospes:
 Illa sibi introrsum, & sub lingua immurmurat: O si
 Ebullit patrum praeclarum funus! & O si
 Sub raistro crepet argenti mihi seria dextro
 Hercule! pupillumve utinam, quem proximus hares
 Impello, expungam! namque est scabiosus, & acri
 Bile tumet. Nerio jam tertia conditur uxor.
 Hac sancte ut poscas, Tiberino in gurgite mergis
 Mane caput bis, terque, & noctem flumine purgas.
 Sat. 2. ver. 3.

Pray; for thy pray'rs the test of heav'n will bear:
 Nor need'st thou take the Gods aside to hear:
 While others, ev'n the mighty men of Rome,
 Big swell'd with mischief to the temples come;
 And in low murmurs and with costly smoak,
 Heav'n's help, to prosper their black vows, invoke.
 So boldly to the Gods mankind reveal,
 What from each other they for shame conceal:
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Give me good fame ye pow'rs, and make me just;
 Thus much the rogue to publick ears will trust:
 In private then. — When wilt thou mighty *Jove*,
 My wealthy uncle from this world remove?
 Or—— O thou Thund'rers son, great *Hercules*,
 That once thy bounteous Deity would please
 To guide my rake upon the chinking sound
 Of some vast treasure, hidden under ground!
 O were my pupil fairly knock'd o'th' head;
 I should possess th' estate if he were dead!
 He's so far gone with Rickets, and with th' Evil,
 That one small dose well send him to the devil.
 This is my neighbour *Nerius's* third spouse,
 Of whom in happy time he rids his house:
 But my eternal wife! —— grant heav'n I may
 Survive to see the fellow of this day!
 Thus that thou may'st the better bring about
 Thy wishes, thou art wickedly devout:
 In *Tiber* ducking thrice, by break of day,
 To wash th' obsecrations of night away.

Dryden.

We may observe from these passages, that it is evident the Heathen world had no notion of serving their Gods in that rational manner which true religion prescribes, and even some of their philosophers, and *Persius* among them, were sensible was the true way. Their whole devotion only consisted in a multitude of rites and ceremonies; and by their extravagant vows, they seemed to strive who should outbid his fellow to purchase success to their fond and criminal desires. Having shewn that men were not influenced by a religious fear in their actions, he proceeds in another place to discover their slavery, and subjection to their passions. The conflict he introduces in the mind of man, between sloth and avarice, is drawn up with a great deal of spirit and humour.

Mane piger stertis, Surge, inquit avaritia; Eja Surge. Negas. Instat, Surge, inquit. Non quæo! Surge. En quid agam? rogitas? Saperdas advehe Ponto, Castoreum, stupas, hebenum, thus, lubrica Coa: Tolle recens primus piper e sitiente Camelo:

Verte

Verte aliquid : jura : sed Jupiter audiet. Eheu !
 Baro regustatum digito terebrare falernum
 Contentus peragas si vivere, tum Fove tendis
 Jam pueris pellem succinctus & ænophorum aptas
 Ocyus ad navem ; nihil obstat quin trabe vasta
 Ægeum rapias, nisi solers luxuria ante
 Seductum moneat, quo deinde insane ruis ? quo ?
 Quid tibi vis ? calido sub pectore mascula bilis
 Intumuit, quam non extinxerit urna cicuta ?
 Tum mare transilias ? tibi torta cannabe fulto
 Cœna sit in transstro ? Vejentanumque rubellum
 Exhalet vapida læsum pice sessilis otba ?
 Quid petis, ut nummi, quos hic quincunce modesto
 Nutrieras, peragant avidos sudare deunces ?
 Indulge genio ; carpamus dulcia ; nostrum est,
 Quod vivis : cinis & manes & fabula fies.
 Vite memor lethi, fugit hora, hoc quod loquor, inde est.
 En quid agis ? duplici in diversum scinderis hamo :
 Huncine, an hunc sequeris. ——— Sat. 5.

When thou would'st take a lazy morning's nap,
 Up, up, says avarice ; thou snore'st again,
 Stretchest thy limbs, and yawn'st, and all in vain.
 The tyrant lucre no denial takes ;
 At his command the unwilling sluggard wakes :
 What must I do ? he cries. What ? says his Lord,
 Why rise, make ready, and go straight aboard :
 With fish from Euxine seas thy vessel freight ;
 Flax, castor, Coan wines, the precious weight
 Of pepper, and Sabaean incense, take
 With thy own hands from the tir'd camel's back,
 And with post-haste thy running markets make.
 Be sure to turn the penny, lie and swear,
 'Tis wholesome sin ; but Fove thou say'st will hear :
 Swear, fool, or starve, for the dilemma's ev'n,
 A tradesman thou, and hope to go to heav'n ?
 Resolv'd for sea, the slaves thy baggage pack,
 Each saddled with his burthen on his back.
 Nothing retards thy voyage now, unless
 Thy other Lord forbids, Voluptuousness :

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And he may ask this civil question, Friend,
 What dost thou make a shipboard? To what end?
 Art thou of *Bethlem's* noble college free?
 Stark staring mad, that thou would'st tempt the sea?
 Cub'd in a cabin, on a mattress laid,
 On a brown george with lousy swabbers fed;
 Dead wine that stinks of the *Boracchio*, sup
 From a foul jack, or greasy maple-cup?
 Say, would'st thou bear all this to raise thy store
 From six i'th' hundred to six hundred more?
 Indulge, and to thy genius freely give,
 For not to live at ease, is not to live:
 Death stalks behind thee, and each flying hour
 Does some loose remnant of thy time devour.
 Live while thou liv'st, for death will make us all
 A name, a nothing but an old wife's tale.
 Speak, wilt thou avarice or pleasure chuse? *Dryden.*

I shall only quote another passage, which being an imitation of * *Horace*, the Reader may compare them together, and afterwards he may confer both with the first scene of the *Eunuch* in *Terence*, between *Phœdria* and *Davus*.

*Dave cito hoc credas, jubeo, finire dolores
 Præteritos meditor; crudum Chærestriatus unguem
 Abrodens ait hæc: an siccis dedecus obstem
 Cognatis? an rem patriam rumore sinistro
 Limen ad obscœnum frangam, dum Chrysidis udas
 Ebrius ante fores extincta cum face canto?
 Euge, puer, sapias, diis depellentibus, agnam,
 Percute: sed censen' plorabit, Dave, relicta?
 Nugaris; solea, puer, objurgabere rubra.
 Ne trepidare velis atque arctos rodere casses
 Nunc ferus & violens: at si vocet, haud mora, dicas;
 Quidnam igitur faciam? ne nunc cum accersor, & ultro
 Supplicet, accedam? —————* *Ibid.*

Says *Phœdria* to his man, Believe me, friend,
 To this uneasy love I'll put an end:

Shall

* *Vid. Horace, lib. 2. sat. 3.*

Shall I run out of all, my friends disgrace,
And be the first lewd unthrift of my race?
Shall I the neighbours nightly rest invade,
At her deaf doors, with some vile serenade?
Well, hast thou freed thy self, his man replies,
Go, thank the Gods, and offer sacrifice.
Ah! says the youth, if we unkindly part,
Will not the poor fond creature break her heart?
Weak soul! and blindly to destruction led;
She break her heart, she'll sooner break your head:
She knows her man, and when you rant and swear,
Can draw you to her with a single hair.
But shall I not return now when she sues?
Shall I my own and her desires refuse?

THE reader, upon comparing this passage with *Horace* and *Terence*, will be naturally led to blame his style, and hardly will allow it better than *Horace's*. In answer to this, it is to be observed, that by better, is not meant a clearer or more elegant style, which would be false, but a nobler and more poetical one. However, there are two great objections to it, the harshness of his metaphors, and its obscurity, to which the former does not a little contribute, and is an inexcusable fault in a writer; the end of writing, whether profit or pleasure, not being attainable without perspicuity: Therefore Mr. *Cowley* has flatly condemn'd our Poet for the want of it. To excuse him in some measure, we may remind the reader, that Satire being a species of poetry that treats of all the passions, follies, and vices of men, and lays open the several actions that are caused by them, it must unavoidably become obscure in some places, to us that live at such a great distance of time from that he wrote in. Many allusions and hints of circumstances, then perhaps universally known, must be now lost to us, for want of a proper knowledge of the several intrigues that were carry'd on at that time, and a sufficient acquaintance with the more peculiar usages and customs of the *Romans*. And though satirical writings may happen to be preserved from the injuries of time, and be read in after ages, their views were present, and the instruction intended for the age they

O 3

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they were composed in. This defence is weaken'd, by its not being a general rule. *Horace* and *Juvenal* are for the most part well understood, whilst *PERSIUS* continues in the dark. To obviate this, it is further alledg'd, that he writing freely of his own times, and not sparing the tyrant himself, must either expose himself to the inconveniency that befel *Juvenal* after him, for speaking too openly, or only rally the little follies and peccadillo's of life, with *Horace*, or draw a veil over his writings; which though it was easily pull'd aside by people of understanding in his time, served to protect him from publick censure and punishment. The brevity of his style, and his close philosophical way of thinking, may also have contributed to its obscurity. And yet it is strange he should have such a close style, after having studied *Lucilius* so much, whose fault was to be redundant; and imitated *Horace* who was so clear and elegant. The Stoics, of all the sects of Philosophers, most affected a copious expression and turn of wit, of which the *Seneca's*, the Philosopher and Tragic Poet are instances. Doubtless there was a melancholy in *PERSIUS's* temper, that infected his writings, and madethem want the spirit, though they abound with the gall, of satire.

BEING of this humour, and educated in the strictest principles of virtue by a Philosopher of *Cornutus's* integrity, who from his master became afterwards his inseparable companion, it is no wonder we find him so severe in his invectives against vice, and so dogmatical in giving his advice.

INDEED he was too grave and serious to court the Muses with success. Like the rest of their sex, they fly the cold and languid lover, and are only won by constancy and a lively and vigorous perseverance; he therefore did well to inform his readers, that he had not tasted of the inspiring Spring, as he says in the prologue to his satires;

Nec fonte labra prolui caballino, &c.

Quintilian indeed allows he had deservedly gain'd a great reputation by his works, though they were but few: *Multum
& vera*

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Q. vera Gloria quamvis uno libro Persius meruit. And
Martial has said much the same.

Sapius in libro memoratur Persius uno.

HE certainly had great natural parts, which were improved by a large stock of acquired knowledge; but he has been so unhappy in the use of it, that it is a common observation concerning him, That whereas commentators are often at a loss what sense to stick to in *Juvenal*, he is so copious; In PERSIUS they are sometimes puzzled to find any at all.





THE
L I F E
O F
S T A T I U S.



UBLIUS PAPINIUS STATIUS was descended of a good family at *Sella*, a Town in *Epirus*, not far from the famous *Dodonan* Grove. Several of the family had the reputation of men of probity and learning, and made a considerable figure in their native country; and the Poet himself has inform'd us of his noble descent.

*Non tibi deformes obscuri sanguinis ortus,
Nec sine luce genus; (quamquam fortuna parentum
Arctior expensis;) etenim te divite ritu
Ponere purpureos infantia adegit amictus
Stirpis honore datos, & nobile pectoris aurum.*

Epicædion in Patrem. Silv. Lib. V. Carm. 3.

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HE was a man of great erudition, and for his merit that way, was made free of the city of *Naples*, where his father had settled some years before. There *STATIUS* was born, but at what time is not very clear; tho' it is most likely it was about the beginning of *Claudius's* reign. He very much delighted in the situation of this place; and having made his fortune at *Rome*, he retired hither as he grew in years, and dwelt in *Naples* to the hour of his death. He speaks much in praise of it in the Poem address'd to his wife, wherein he invites her to come and settle with him there.

*Nostra quoque & propriis tenuis, nec rara colonis
Parthenope, cui mite solum trans aquora vecta
Ipse Dionaea monstravit Apollo columba:
Has ego te sedes, nam nec mihi barbara Thrace,
Nec Libye natale solum, transferre laboro.*

Silv. L. 3. Carm. 5.

WHEN his father came first to settle here, he soon made himself famous by the profession of Oratory, which he taught with that applause, that he had all the youth of quality under his care.

*Hinc tibi vota patrum credi, generosaque pubes
Te monitore regi; mores & facta priorum
Discere ———*

Silv. L. 5. Carm. 3.

HE continued the same profession when he came to *Rome*, and met with the same encouragement there.

*Mox & Romuleam stirpem, proceresque futuros
Instruis, inque patrum vestigia ducere perstas.
Non tibi certasset juvenilia fingere corda
Nestor, & indomiti Phoenix moderator alumni,
Quique tubas acres lituosque audire volentem
Æaciden alio frangebatur carmine Chiron.*

Silv. L. 5. C. 3.

WITH the advantage of his education under such a person, it is not to be wonder'd at, if *STATIUS* being endow'd

dow'd with a fine natural disposition, made great improvements, and shew'd himself deserving of all his father's care and indulgence for him. He was but young when he fell in love with *Claudia*, a Musician's Widow, and soon marry'd her. She had the character of a woman of sense and virtue; and it by the latter she proved a faithful wife to him, the former render'd her an agreeable companion and useful friend. It being commonly believed, that she help'd and assisted him in his *Thebaid*: and to this he is thought to have alluded, where he says,

— *Longi tu sola laboris*
Conscia, cumque tuis crevit mea Thebais annis.

Silv. L. 3. C. 5.

She had a daughter by her former husband, whom he loved as tenderly as if she had been his own; and in the poem to his wife, above quoted, has shewn her to have been a person every way deserving his affection.

Sed venient plenis, venient connubia tadis
Sic certe formaeque bonis animique meretur,
Sive Chelyn complexa petit, seu voce paterna
Discendum musis sonat & mea carmina flectit;
Candida seu molli diducit brachia motu:
Ingenium probitas, artemque modestia vincit.

Ibid.

He mentions in the same Poem, his wife's expressions of joy and satisfaction at the signal marks he receiv'd of the Emperor *Domitian's* favour and esteem, and for his three victories at the *Alban Games*, and her concern for his ill success, when he lost the Prize in the Capitol.

— *Ter me nitidas Albana ferentem*
Dona comas, sanctoque indutum Caesaris auro
Visceribus complexa tuis, fertisque dedisti
Oscula anhelata meis; tu cum Capitolia nostra
Inficiata lyra; saxum ingratumque dolebas
Mecum victa Jovem —

Ibid.

His

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His happy talent in writing occasional Poems, soon recommended him to persons of the first rank, and the highest merit, to several of whom he has address'd some of those little pieces, which make up his five Books of *Silva* or *Miscellanies*; and from hence we may probably conjecture, that the reason why *Martial*, his contemporary, was wholly silent concerning him, at the same time that he makes honourable mention of most of the other poets, was his being piqued at *Statius's* success in those extempore compositions, by which he seemed to invade his province of *Epigram*: And perhaps his being so much in favour with *Paris*, *Domitian's* favourite, and valuing himself a little too much on that account, might be another cause of *Martial's* silence. Thro' *Paris's* recommendation, he ingratiated himself so far with *Domitian*, as to be admitted to sit at table with him at a publick entertainment, which the Emperor made to all the most considerable persons of his empire. The Poet has described this treat very poetically, but by an artful flattery to his prince, tells the reader, he had no leisure to consider the great splendor and magnificence of the feast, being wholly taken up in looking upon the Emperor.

*Ipsū, ipsum cupido tantum spectare vacavit,
Tranquillum vultu. sed majestate serena
Mulcentem radios, submittentemque modeste
Fortuna vexilla sua: tamen ore nitebat
Dissimulatus honos.*

L. 4. 2.

Some might be apt to think this complement enough for a supper, but the Poet grossly goes on to compare him with *Jupiter*, as described by *Homer* at the feast with the virtuous *Æthiopians*; yet it must be own'd the versification is noble, and the thought and language very sublime.

*Parva loquor, nec dum aequo tuos, Germanice, vultus:
Talis ubi Oceani finem, mensasque revisit
Æthiopum, sacro diffusus nectare vultus
Dux superum, secreta jubet dare carmina Musas,
Et Palienqos Phœbum laudare triumphos.*

Silv. L. 4. Carm. 2.

Had.

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Had the Poet had less vanity, he had not been so transported on such occasion; though perhaps knowing he had an absolute tyrant to deal with, he might judge it more prudent to overshoot the mark, than to fall short in his acknowledgments. *Domitian* had likewise presented him with a golden crown, when he gain'd the prize in the *Alban* mount at the *Quinquatria*, Games celebrated in honour of *Minerva*: this he acknowledges in the Poem above quoted, and adds, it was given him because he had composed some pieces on the Emperor's triumphs over the *Germans* and *Daca*.

——— *Talis longo post tempore venit
Lux mihi, Trojana qualis sub collibus Alba
Cum modo Germanas acies, modo Dacca sonantem
Prælia, Palladio tua me manus induit auro. L. 4. 2.*

But with all this share in his princes good graces, he was so unhappy as not to be taken notice of by any of his contemporaries but *Juvenal*; and he is thought by many, not to have done it without some bitterness. To me, the occasion of his mentioning *Stattus*, seems to be this: He observes in his Satire, the low state and small encouragement given to men of Letters, who were often reduced to the hard necessity of writing for bread; and that notwithstanding the world allowed their merit and admired their writings. *Stattus* is brought in as an unhappy example of this ill usage.

*Curritur ad vocem jucundam, & carmen amica
Thebaidos, latam fecit cum Stattus urbem
Promisitque diem, tanta dulcedine captos
Afficit ille animos, tantaque libidine vulgi
Auditur; sed cum fregit subsellia versu,
Esurit, intactam Paridi nisi vendit Agaven.*

Juvenal Sat. 7.

All Rome is pleas'd when *Stattus* will rehearse,
And longing crowds expect the promis'd verse:
His lofty numbers with so great a gust
They hear, and swallow with such eager lust:

But

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But while the common suffrage crown'd his cause,
And broke the benches with their loud applause;
His Muse had starv'd, had not a piece unread,
And by a player bought supply'd her bread. *Dryden.*

From this passage we learn that *Statius* wrote a Tragedy which *Paris* purchas'd, who from a Player was become the Emperor's Minion, the Poet being reduced to sell it for his subsistence. This circumstance perhaps might have introduced our Poet to that Favourite; for I do not find that after his admission to his Patronage, he wanted the conveniences of Life. However it does not appear from what has been quoted, that *Juvenal* has spoken reproachfully of him, but rather has given him great and real commendations, and has particularly taken notice of his noble style; the translator has altogether favoured this sense. This testimony deserves the more to be considered, as coming from one, whom both his friendship to *Martial*, and hatred to the Court, might reasonably be presumed to have made our Poet's Enemy.

HAVING for some time successfully exercised his Muse in these Miscellanies, he set about his *Thebaid*, wherein he was assisted by some of the most learned men of the age, and particularly by *Maximus Junius*, a nobleman of great accomplishments.

————— *Te fido monitore nostra*
Thebais, multa cruciata lima,
Tentat audaci fide Mantuana
Gaudia fama.

L. 5. 7.

Here the Poet insinuates, that he spent many years in composing this work, and had endeavoured to take example from *Virgil*, whom he has elsewhere profess to follow, modestly confessing at the same time the wide difference between him and his great Master.

————— *Nec tu divinam Æneida tenta,*
Sed longe sequere, & vestigia semper adora.

Theb. Lib. 12.

————— *Maroneique*

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———— *Maroneique sedens in margine templi
Sumo animum, & magni tumulis ad canto magistri.*
Lib. 4. 4.

He was at least twelve years about this Poem.

*O mihi bis senos multum vigilata per annos
Thebai. ———* Theb. Lib. 12.

And was grown old by that time he had finished it.

———— *Nos facta aliena canendo
Vergimur in Senium ———* Lib. 4. 4.

He returned to Naples to correct it, and soon after set about the *Achilleid*, but death overtook him before he had gone far with that work.

———— *En egomet somnum & geniale secutus
Littus, ubi Ausonio se condidit hospita portu.
Parthenope tenues ignavo pollice chordas
Pulso. ———* Lib. 4. 4.

———— *Jam Sidonios emensa labores
Thebais, optato collegit carbasa portu:
Nunc vacuos crines alio subit infula nexu:
Troja quidem magnusque mihi tentatur Achilles.*
Ibid.

Here the Poet goes on to make Domitian a complement, acknowledging he ought to chuse that Prince's exploits for the subject of his song; but he mistrusts his own strength, and thinks a writer should not undertake such a task, before he has well weighed and considered his abilities.

*Sed vocat arcitenens alio pater, armaque monstrat
Ausonii majora ducis: trahit impetus illo
Jam pridem, retrahitque timor, stabuntne sub illa
Mole humeri? an magno vincetur pondere cervix?*
L. 4. 4.
He

He used to celebrate *Virgil's* birth-day with great solemnity, frequently visiting his tomb, which he has hinted at in the lines a little above quoted.

— *Maroneique sedens in margine templi*
Sumo animum, & magni tumulis ad canto Magistri. Ibid.

On this occasion we may observe, that the heathen Theology admitted of a kind of worship paid to the souls of departed Heroes, whom they judged still to retain those inclinations they had when in the body. Thus *Alexander* sacrificed to the Manes of *Achilles*, to inspire him with courage and conduct in the war. And their Philosophers not only made no scruple of paying this adoration to Demons, but recommended it, giving many instances of their protection of mankind. *Maximus Tyrius*, the Platonic Philosopher, is very large on this head in his second Dissertation *de Deo Socratis*, to which we refer the reader. And with this view *Statius* may be supposed, not only out of vanity, but very sincerely, to have had a devotion for the Genius of *Virgil*, hoping to obtain thereby from him no small assistance in his poetical compositions.

We have no account of the time nor manner of his death. It is probable that it happened in *Trajan's* time, and at *Naples*, where it seems likely that he continued till the time of his death, having no call to Court after *Domitian's* decease. From his *Silva* one may gather that he was of a sweet disposition and grateful temper, but somewhat vain and conceited; for it cannot be inferred from the cruel character of his Heroes, that he was of the same temper; for therein he seems to have kept close to History, and the character of those barbarous times. He had no children by his wife, and therefore adopted a son, whose death he has lamented in a very affectionate manner.

— *Tellure cadentem*
Excepi, & vinctum genitali carmine fovi,
Poscentemque novas tremulis ululatus auras
Inferni vitæ, quid plus tribuere parentes?

Nonna

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*Nonne gemam te, care puer, quo sospite natos
Non cupii ———*

L. 5. 5.

This is a good argument that *Domitian* and *Paris's* bounty had set him above want ; one, if not the principal end of Adoption, being to have one to inherit what we leave behind us, whose grateful behaviour and filial duty might supply the place of a true son. Besides, the poet has informed us, that he had a small country-seat and estate in *Tuscany*, where *Alba* formerly stood.

*Parvi beatus ruris honoribus
Qua prisca Teucros Alba colit lares,
Fortem atque facundum Severum
Non solitis fidibus saluto.*

IT may be objected to these lesser compositions of *STATIUS*, that the hurry they were written in, is no apology for them. *Horace's* authority is brought to confirm the objection, whose opinion of such hasty writers is too well known to need being quoted. In answer to this, it is just we should observe, that the occasion of writing some of these pieces required such an extempore effusion, and that their whole merit did very much consist herein. The prefaces to the first and second Book of these *Silva* will justify the necessity of it. After all, they are not the least valuable part of this writer's works. The style is generally elegant and easy ; the thoughts natural for the most part, except where the Emperor's service call'd for a flight or two, and agreeably diversified from common-place descriptions and allusions, after *Ovid's* manner. In the poem on the recovery of *Rutilius Gallicus* from a dangerous fit of Sickness, among other thoughts, he has the following, which ingeniously, though modestly, discovers his anxiety for that great man's danger, by comparing his share in it to that of a small vessel, which though of less value, yet suffers in the same storm with those of a greater bulk.

*Quis mihi tot cœtus inter populique patrumque
Sic cura votique locus? tamen ardua testor*

Sidera,

*Sidera, teque pater vaturn Thymbræ, quis omni
Luce mihi, quis nocte timor? dum postibus hærens
Assiduus, nunc aure vigil, nunc lumine cuncta
Auguror? immensa veluti connexa carina
Cymba minor, cum sævit hyems; pro parte furentes
Parva receptat aquas, & eodem volvitur austro.*

How soft and moving is *Venus's* discourse to the bashful virgin, in the *Epithalamium* of *Stella* and *Violantilla*, though the chief merit of it consists in the style, the thought being only that beauty is subject to decay, and old age insensibly comes on?

*Quonam hic usq; sopor vacuiq; modestia lecti,
O mihi Laurentes inter delecta puellas?
Quis morum fideiq; modus? nunquamne virili
Submittere jugo? veniet jam tristior ætas:
Exerce formam, & venientibus utere donis.
Non ideo tibi tale decus, vultusq; superbos
Meq; dedi, viduos ut transmittare per annos,
Seu non cara mihi——
His mulcet dictis tacitumque inspirat amorem.*

Lib. I. 2.

The fond insinuating behaviour of the young Love that speaks to *Venus* in the same poem, is prettily described in *Ovid's* manner.

*Dixerat; & tenera matris cervice pendit
Blandus, & admotis tepescit pectora pennis.* Lib. I. 2.

What follows is a fine complement to the lady's beauty; *Venus* saying, that the Loves would mistake the lady for their mother, and, but for her reconciliation with *Juno*, she need only let *Jupiter* see her beauty, to make him disguise himself again for her love.

*Et si flammiferas potuisset scandere sedes,
Hæcque intrare Domos, ipsi erraretis amores;
Quod nisi me longis placasset Juno querelis,*
Falsus

*Falsus huic pennas & cornua sumeret aethra
Rektor, in hanc vero cecidisset Jupiter auro.* Ibid.

There is something peculiarly elegant in the character of his friend *Vopiscus*, and speaking the noble retirement of a great man that is above the world.

*Scilicet hic illi meditantur pondera mores,
Hic premitur fecunda quies, victusque serena
Fronte gravis, sanusque nitor, luxuque carentes
Delicia, quas ipse suis digressus Athenis
Mallet deserto senior Gargettius horto.* Lib. 1. 3.

In the poem on occasion of his friend *Celer's* voyage, the following lines are a very poetical expostulation on that man's hardy attempt that first went to sea; a common topic among the poets, but uncommonly handled by our author.

*Quis rude & alscissum miseris animantibus aquor
Fecit iter? solidaque pios telluris alumnos
Expulit in fluctus, pelagoque immisit hiantes
Audax ingenii? ———
Imus in abruptum, gentileque undique terras
Fugimus, exiguo clausi trabe & aere nudo.
Inde furor ventis, indignataque procella,
Et coeli fremitus, & fulmina plura Tonanti.* L. 3. 2.

It is an ingenious and uncommon thought, to say, the storms that happen at sea were sent by the Gods to punish man's presumption. The reader may try how it appears in an *English* dress.

What daring wretch first made the new essay
Thro' vast divided seas to find a way?
Leaving the solid earth, her sons expos'd
To swelling waves, in some small bark expos'd?
Since they forsake their native shores for gain,
To tempt the dangers of the stormy main,
Justly presumptuous mortals meet their fate,
By *Jove's* avenging arm destroy'd, and *Neptune's* hate.
The

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The comparison of a courtier, that kept in favour with several Princes, to a Bark that can sail thro' all seas alike, is obvious, but well turn'd.

*Tu toties mutata ducum juga rite tulisti
Integer, inque omni felix tua cymba profundo.* L. 3. 3.

He very affectionately describes the pleasures he should reap in his retirement to his native city, Naples.

*Quas & mollis hyems, & frigida temperat æstas,
Quas imbelle fretum tepentibus alluit undis,
Pax secunda locis, & desidis otia vite,
Et nunquam turbata quies, somnique peracti.
Nulla foro rabies, aut stricta iurgia legis
Merum jura viris: solum, & sine fascibus æquum.*
L. 3. 5.

Mild winter here, and temp'rate summers please,
The sea forgets to rage, and flows with ease.
Peaceful security is spread around,
The life of easy leisure here is found;
Sleep undisturb'd, and soft repose, and rest,
Which no vile wrangling humours e'er molest;
Here truth and sanctity of manners reign,
And men do right without the fear of pain.

The complaint to the God of Sleep, that he had forsaken him, is easy and moving; and his description of all nature's enjoying the benefit of rest, is very just and natural.

*Crimine quo merui, juvenis placidissime divum,
Quove errore miser, donis ut solus egerem,
Somne, tuis? tacet omne pecus, volucresque, feraque,
Et simulant fessos curvata cacumina somnos.
Nec trucibus fluvii idem sonus, occidit horror
Æquoris, & terris maria acclinata quiescunt.*

Offspring of heav'n, kind pow'r of balmy rest,
What crime has made thee loath my troubled breast?

My

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My eyes alone continual vigils keep,
While all the brute creation's hush'd in sleep;
Beneath the night-dew droop the bending woods,
And a still silence calms the slumb'ring floods;
O'er the rough rocks no noisy torrent roars,
And weary'd waves recline upon the shores. T—rs.

The favourable encouragement which the generous ambition of a young nobleman, descended from illustrious ancestors, meets with in his first setting out into the world, is finely illustrated by the following comparison:

—*Romulei qualis per jugera Circi
Cum puichre visu, titulis generosus avitis
Expectatur equus, cujus de stemmate longo
Fœlix emeritos habet admissura parentes,
Illum omnes acuiunt plausus, illum ipse volentem
Pulvis, & incurva gaudent agnoscere meta.
Sic te, clare puer, genitum sibi Curia sensit.* Ibid.

As Rome's brave sons to th' Circus crowd the day,
They hear th' impatient courser starts away,
Whose fam'd descent they know, and generous race,
Viewing his lovely shape and noble pace,
With shouts of loud applause the steed admire,
That in his breast augments the native fire:
Now clouds of dust salute him on the course,
And the approaching goal applauds th' expected horse.
Thy growing worth, thus *Cæsar* did approve,
Born to adorn and win thy country's love.

His remark of youth's being obnoxious to be corrupted, when under no government, as trees when not cut are to spend their strength in leaves without fruit, is just and well imagined. I chuse to make these quotations to justify this Author from the imputation of bombast, with which he has frequently been charged.

*Quem non corrumpit pubes effrena? novaque
Libertas properata toga? cœn nescia falcis
Silva comas tollit, fructumque expirat in umbras.* Ibid.
The

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The reader, by comparing the following description of the spring, with some of the other Poets, may be better able to judge of this writer's Genius. The language of this Ode is in the middle style, and the description very natural; but wants that life and uncommon propriety of expression that so much recommends *Horace's Odes*; however there is something agreeable in the turn of the two last lines.

*Fam trux ad Arctos Parrhasias hyems
Concessit aliis obruta solibus;*

Fam pontus ac tellus renident,

Fam Zephyris Aquilo refractus.

*Nunc cuncta veris frondibus annuis
Crinitur arbor, nunc volucrum novi*

Questus, inexpertumque carmen

Quod tacita statuere bruma.

Lib. 3.

The horrid winter now retires,

Subdu'd by *Phæbus'* stronger rays,

The earth and sea alike conspires

To speak new joy while *Zephir* plays.

Each tree its blooming verdure wears,

Rich in the beauties of the spring,

And what it'h' winter he prepares,

The warbling bird begins to sing.

WE are now come to consider that work of STATIUS's which *Juvenal*, as above quoted, has inform'd us, was so much admired in its rehearsal at *Rome*, and wherein the author proposed nothing less than *Virgil* for his imitation. This falls out unluckily for him, because it will in some measure lead us to compare the two Poems, from which he is likely to come off with disadvantage; but yet, allowing all this, we may apply to him what *Ovid* said of *Phaeton*,

—*Magnis tamen excidit ausis.*

Met. Lib. 2.

Before

Before we examine this poem, it will be proper the reader should have a regard to the time when the event therein spoken of happened, which was about 1251 years before the birth of Christ, and 42 before the destruction of *Troy*. The history of the poem, in short is this: *OEdipus*, whose story and misfortunes are so well known, left the kingdom of *Thebes* to *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, his incestuous offspring by his mother *Jocasta*, with this condition, that they should govern alternately every other year. It being *Polynices*'s turn to resign the crown, he retired to his friend and ally *Adrastus* king of *Argos*: He there met with *Tydeus* son of *Oeneus*, but not knowing him, they quarrelled, and fought in the king's palace. *Adrastus*, coming out upon the alarm, separated the combatants, and discovering who they were, gives them his two daughters in marriage. The brothers-in-law soon united in a close friendship, and from blows fell to mutual embraces. The father-in-law promises to restore both to their kingdoms, and *Tydeus* his help to see his friend *Polynices* first settled in the *Theban* throne, which now *Eteocles* withheld from him, and was resolved to keep wholly to himself, now he was in possession of it. Hereupon *Tydeus* undertakes an embassy to *Thebes*, but his proposals are rejected with scorn. Having received this just provocation, war is declared against *Eteocles*, and an army being raised, marches against *Thebes* under the conduct of seven generals, who are all slain in the war but *Adrastus*. The two brothers killed one another in single combat, *OEdipus* is banished the city, *Jocasta* violently puts an end to her miserable life, and *Creon* usurps the throne. The vanquished party being insulted by him, and not suffered to bury their dead, apply to *Theseus* king of *Athens*, who marches with an army against him and takes the city. Thus far history goes.

THE subject therefore of the *Thebaid* is not so ill chosen as conducted; and the moral to be drawn from thence is so far useful, as it may serve to shew the ill effects of treachery and ambition on the one hand, and of a too greedy and insatiable thirst of revenge on the other. In the carrying on the design of the poem, he has kept to history too much to allow himself those necessary helps, which probably fiction alone can furnish a writer with, to
form

form a just and regular plan of his whole work. Since then it is defective in the fable, we cannot so properly call it an Epic poem, as an important historical event, poetically related; that is, adorn'd with episodes, machines, and the like, which poetry makes use of in her addresses to the imagination. However, the reader may call it an Epic poem, if he will allow any to be such that are not exactly built after *Homer's* and *Virgil's* model; the *Thebaid* having the fairest pretensions of any other among the antients to the third place.

He has formed no principal heroic character, as his master *Virgil* had done, and consequently has not preserved a just subordination in his characters. Nor has he sufficiently diversified them, as *Homer* did. His heroes are drawn as savage, and cruel as he found them in history; their manners, like those in *Homer*, being made suitable to the times they lived in, and therefore afford not such useful examples to posterity. Though they may be distinguished in their manners from each other, yet a general character of courage mixed with rage, revenge, violence, or impiety, reigns in *Tydeus*, *Hippomedon*, *Capaneus*, and *Polynices*. *Adrastus* is a more mild and noble character, and we may discover in his behaviour the marks of a wise and religious prince, a tender parent, a true friend, and prudent general. The character of the prophet *Amphiaraus* is the reverse to that of *Achilles* in *Homer*. Each knew their fate to be unavoidable, if they went to war; but as *Achilles* bravely meets his fate, *Amphiaraus* meanly flies from it: The one is with reluctance disguised by a fond mother, and placed among the women; the other is shamefully betrayed in his retreat by his wife's covetousness, upon whom he calls for vengeance, just before he is swallowed up by the earthquake, with his last breath revengefully devoting her to death, and making his son a parricide. The two *Theban* brothers are impious and unnatural; and *Polynices* resigns the crown with as much unjust reluctance, as *Eteocles* basely keeps it beyond the term agreed. The Gods, as in *Homer*, make as cruel a figure as the men. *Jupiter* himself is the author and promoter of this fatal war; he gives ear to the distracted rage of the wretched *OEdipus*, imploring the divine vengeance

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geance on his unnatural sons: but thinking the Gods too slow, he invokes the fury *Typhoea* to hasten to sow discord among them. Indeed, to shew the dire effects of this, and the fatal consequences of civil broils, seem to be the immediate moral of the poem.

— Regendi

*Savus amor, ruptaeque vices, jurisque secundi
Ambitus impatiens, & summo dulcius unum
Stare loco, sociisque comes discordia regnis.*

L. 1. Theb.

Or what is more fully expressed in *Homer*,

Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη, εἰς κοιρανὸς ἔστω. *Il. a.*

The more to convince us how dangerous a passion ambition is, the poet has justly observ'd, so poor a kingdom as that of *Thebes* could not give very strong temptations.

— Nuda prestat

Armavit fratres, pugna est de paupere regno.

L. 1. Theb.

THE Poet having kept all along close to history, was doubtless very diligent in searching into those obscure monuments of antiquity he himself could light on, or his father's great learning give him an account of; as he acknowledges in his *Silva*:

*Tu cantus stimulare meos, tu pandere facta
Heroum, bellique modos, positusque locorum
Monstrabas. —*

Silv. L. 5. 3.

This diligence is particularly remarkable in the fourth Book, where he gives an account of the several people of *Greece* that armed for the war. In this he has happily imitated *Virgil*, by keeping up the spirit and dignity of his numbers, and diversifying the detail with proper epithets and short descriptions; and as *Virgil* has invoked the Muse, *STATIUS* has invoked no less than three Deities to assist him; *Fame*, *Antiquity*, and *Calliope*; and I think

think not injudiciously, each having their proper part in this place, which it were needless to point out to the Reader's notice.

*Nunc mihi Fama prior, mundique arcana Potestas,
Cui meminisse ducum vitasque extendere cura,
Pande viros, tuque O nemoris regina sonori
Calliope, quas ille manus qua moverit arma
Gradivus, quantas populis solaverit urbes,
Sublata molire lyra, nec enim altior ulli
Mens hauslo de fonte venit. ———*

Theb. L. 4.

Tydeus at the head of his band is described in his full vigour, and rejoicing at the trumpet's sound, and compared to a serpent that has newly cast his skin.

*Ecce inter medios patria ciet agmina gentes
Fulmineus Tydeus ; jam letus, & integer artus ;
Ut primum strepuere tubæ, cœn lubricus alta
Arguis humo verni blanda ad spiramina solis
Erigitur, liber senio, & squallentibus annis
Exutus, letisque minax intervenit herbis.
Ah ! miser, agrestum si quis per gramen hianti
Obvius, & primo siccaverit ora veneno.*

Theb. L. 4.

Soon as the trumpet breath'd the voice of arms,
The chief with eager joy his troops allarms ;
Fiercely he stalks, impatient to engage,
In all the blooming pride of ripen'd age.
So his bright crest th' enliven'd serpent rears,
Freed from the clogging scales and rust of years ;
High to the Sun his threat'ning length displays,
And round the meadows darts his verdant rays.
Ah ! wretch, that meets him in the grassy plains,
And sucks the vig'rous poison thro' his tingling veins.

T—rs

The Thebans prepare with less chearfulness for their defence, and Eteocles terrified by several inauspicious omens, applies to Tyresias the Prophet, to know the event of the war. He, by his charms, raises the Ghost of Laius, who gives him a doubtful answer, telling him, that indeed his Brother Polynices should never reign in Thebes, but that

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his cruel Father should conquer; meaning, that by his Prayers to Heaven and Hell, the miserable *OEdipus* should prevail with those Powers to punish his unnatural Children, and make them fall by one another's Sword, as they afterwards did in single combat.

PARTHENOPEUS, Prince of the *Arcadians*, was one of the seven Generals that went against *Thebes*. As the Poet was well versed in the antiquities of *Greece*, he neglects no opportunity of inserting such accounts of it as are consistent with his subject; and so on this occasion, he takes notice of the following fabulous Tradition that obtained with that People, which he has very elegantly turned.

—— *Nemorum vos stirpe rigenti*
Fama sotos, cum prima pedum vestigia tellus
Admirata tulit: nondum arva, domusque, nec urbes,
Connubisque modus, quercus laurique ferebant
Cruda puerperia, ac populos umbrosa creavit
Fraxinus, & foeta viridis puer excidit orno.
Hi lucis stupuisse vices, noctisque feruntur
Nubila, & occiduum longe Titana secuti
Desperasse diem. —

Lib. 4. *Theb.*

The earth as yet untill'd no plough-share felt,
And men nor houses had, nor cities built;
Nor marriage was by law to one restrain'd,
But nature rude and savage still remain'd:
When you, *Arcadians*, it same tells us true,
A hardy offspring from the forests grew.
The lab'ring Oak and Lawrel teem'd with young,
And from the spreading Ash whole Nations sprung.
With admiration day and night they view'd,
The setting Sun with weary steps pursu'd,
And fear'd departing light wou'd never be renew'd.

AMPHIARAUS, another General and Priest of *Apollo*, as well as Prince, (which two Offices were commonly united in the same person in those early times,) having been betrayed in his retirement, (where he had concealed himself to avoid going to the war, which he prophetically foresaw would be fatal to him, as well as unfortunate to all,) by his Wife's ambition, to wear the fatal Bracelet of *Her-*
mione,

mione, given at first by Polynices to his Wife Argia,) which she obtain'd by this treachery, endeavours at least to dissuade the confederate Princes from this undertaking. The brave, but impious Capaneus, another of the Generals, thus insultingly answers him, and declares for the War: where he meets the fate his impiety deserv'd, being thunder-struck by Jupiter in the midst of his Blasphemies, as he was scaling the Walls of Thebes, and ready to enter into the City.

——— *Tua prorsus inani*

*Verba polo causas, absirusaque semina rerum
Eliciunt ? miseret superum, si carmina cura,
Humanaque preces : quid inertia pectora terres ?
Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor ; & tibi tuto
Nunc eat iste furor. Sed prima ad classica cum jam
Hostilem Ismenon galeis Dircenque bibemus,
Ne mihi tunc, moneo, lituos atque arma volenti
Obvius ire pares, ventisque aut alite visa,
Bellorum proferre diem : procul hac tibi mollis
Insula, terrificique aberit dementia Phœbi :
Illic augur ego, & mecum quicumque parati
Insanire manu. ———*

L. 3. Theb.

Can empty words the hidden path disclose
Of fate and nature, and no man expose
Its secret steps ? Unhappy Gods, that stand
Obedient to thy pray'r, or charms command!
But what are they ? The creatures of our fear,
This once enjoy thy sacred rage ; but hear,
If when the warlike trumpet sounds to arms,
Again you'd fill our breasts with false alarms,
Forbear to meet me eager to engage,
Conceal the omens dire, and sad presage:
Lest not thy mix'd honours thee besfriend,
Nor Phœbus holy rage thy life defend.
No aug'ry then can stop th' intended fight,
There I'm the Augur and my friends the lucky flight.

Here we have the true picture of an impious undaunted courage, that despises the most solemn Institutions of Religion, attributing the belief of all Religion to fear and cowardice.

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STATIUS's games, it must be confessed, are not so happily introduced as could be wished. The story of *Hyppispile* is at best but tacked to the principal subject, as the underplot to a Play; though the *Episode* is very moving and drawn up with some art; and the death and *Apotheosis* of *Archemorus*, is a tolerable occasion of celebrating the games, when it is observed, that the Prophet *Amphiraus* assures the distressed parents, to comfort them for their loss, that their Son was deified.

Ne fletu violate sacrum, ne plangite divos:

Nam Deus iste, Deus. ———

L. 5. Theb.

HE is more successful in his machinery, which he frequently introduces on proper occasions, that very much embellish and enliven the Narration. For instance; the army of the Allies marching against *Thebes*, by the way are in great distress for want of water; the cause is thus poetically contrived by STATIUS: *Bacchus* returning from *Scythia* and *Thrace*, which he had been reducing to the celebration of his *Orgies*, as he drew near his native city, discovered the enemies forces, and finding its ruin is decreed by fate, he resolves at least to defer the calamity for a while. This is in imitation of *Juno's* behaviour in the *Æneid*. Therefore he calls to the Nymphs and river Gods, and lays his commands upon them to stop their springs, and dry up all their streams; which they presently obey.

*Tempus erat medii cum solem in culmina mundi
Tollit ankela dies, ubi tardus hiantibus arvis
Stat vapor, atque omnes admittunt athera luci.
Undarum vocat ille Deas, mediusque silentum
Incipit: Agrestes fluviorum numina Nympha,
Et nostri pars magna gregis, perferte laborem
Quem damus; Argolicas paulum mihi fontibus amnes
Stagnaue & errantes obducite pulvere rivos.
Diffugere unda: squallent fontesque lacu'que,
Et cava ferventi durescunt flumina limo.
Ægra solo macies, tenerique in origine culmi*

Inclinata

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*Inclinata seges; deceptum margine ripa
Stat pecus, atque amnes quarunt armenta natatos,*
Lib. 4. Theb.

'Twas when the tow'ring Sun's meridian ray
Scorch'd with diffusive heat the panting day,
No trickling vapour cool'd the thirsty mead,
And darting beams illumin'd ev'ry shade;
He to the river Goddesses repairs,
They silent stand, and he presents his prayers.
Ye Nymphs, who o'er the willing streams preside,
Whose guardian pow'r directs th' obedient tide,
My lov'd companions, grant your God's desire,
Beneath your oozy leaves a while retire,
Back to your springs recal the liquid train,
While the parch'd earth implores your aid in vain.
Swift fled the streams, the languid springs decay,
Their channels stiffen with the burning clay;
A barren dearth devour'd the sickly plain,
And in the blade expir'd the tender grain;
Deluded flocks upon the margin stood,
And fought with wond'ring eyes the usual flood. T—rs.

The whole is finely illustrated by a comparison of the River Nile's not overflowing the Country as usual in *Ægypt*.

*Sic ubi se magnis refluxus suppressit in undis
Nilus, & Eoa liquentia pabula bruma
Ore premit, fumant desertæ gurgite valles,
Et patris undosi sonitus expectat hiulca
Ægyptus, donec Phariis alimenta rogatus
Donat agris, magnumque reducat messibus annum.*

So when the angry Nile disdains to flow,
And curbs th' expected Tides of eastern Snow,
The smoaking channels quick supplies require,
And thirsty *Memphians* eagerly desire
The grateful roaring of their watry Sire:
Untill th' entreated God regards their pray'r,
Fattens the *Pharian* fields, and crowns the fruitful year.

T — rs.

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In the first Book, a council of the Gods is held, where-
in *Jupiter* declares his resolution of destroying the houses
of *Cadmus* and *Tantalus*. *Juno*, as her custom was, in-
terposes in behalf of her favourite *Argos*; but the Father
of the Gods severely silences her, confirming his decree by
a solemn Oath; and dispatches *Mercury* to raise the Ghost
of *Laius*, who is sent to incite *Eteocles* to refuse to resign
the Crown. *Mercury's* dress and departure on this occa-
sion, is thus beautifully described by the Poet.

*Paret Atlantiades dictis genitoris, & inde
Summa pedum propere plantaribus illigat alis :
Obnubitque comas ; & temperat astra Galero.
Tum dextra virgam inseruit, qua pellere dulces
Aut suadere iterum somnos ; qua nigra subire
Tartara, & exangues animare assueverat umbras ;
Desiluit ; tenuique exceptus inhorruit aura.
Nec mora, sublimes raptim per inane volatus
Carpit, & ingenti designat nubila gyro.* L. 1. Theb.

The heavenly messenger his sire obeys ;
Then to his feet the flutt'ring wings displays ;
His flowing hair within his hat confines,
And to his right, th' enchanting Rod assigns,
That with a touch awakes from soft repose,
And can again the watching eye-lids close :
Obedient to its charm the shades revive,
Quit the pale realms of death and once more live !
The tow'ring God now with a shining ray,
Marks thro' the parted clouds his circling way.

Laius being thus raised, appears to his Grandson in a
dream, under the shape of the Prophet *Tiresias*. His
changing himself is done after *Ovid's* manner.

*Tunc Senior, quæ jussus, agit, neu falsa videri
Noctis imago queat, longævi vatis opacos
Tiresia vultus, vocemque, & vellera nota
Induitur ; mansere comæ, propexaque mento
Canicies, pallorque suus ; sed falsa cucurrit
Insula per crines, glaucaque innexus olivæ
Vittarum provenit honos.*

L. 2. Theb.

The

The fire obey'd his heavenly guide, and took
The rev'rend form of old *Tiresia's* look ;
Rough on his limbs the hoary furs appear,
His accent speaks the venerable seer ;
His own dead paleness in his face he wears,
Soft from his chin depend the silver hairs :
The holy fillets round his temples spread,
With borrow'd pomp adorn his graceful head. T---rs.

He succeeds so well in his errand, that the young King,
inspired with rage against his brother *Polynices*, resolves not
to resign the Crown to him, being fully persuaded that if
he did, the other would never part with it, when his
turn should come again to reign. His passion is finely il-
lustrated by STATIUS in the following comparison.

*Qualis ubi audito venantium murmure tigris
Horruit in maculas, somnosque excussit inertes ;
Bella cupit, laxatque genas, & temperat ungues ;
Mox ruit in turmas, natisque alimenta cruentis
Spirantem fert ore virum : sic excitus ira*

Ductor ————— L. 2. Theb.

As when a Tyger hears the rustling sounds
Of shouting hunters trampling o'er the grounds,
Fiercely she starts, her angry spots she draws,
Edges her teeth, and points her griping claws ;
Then springing forth, the trembling wretch she tears,
And to her den the quivering carcass bears ;
So burns the King. T---rs.

The description of the fatal serpent that devoured *Arche-
morus*, whilst *Hypsipile* his Nurse, who had left him lying
on the grass, was gone to direct the Army to a spring
of water, is full of terror, and naturally prepares the Rea-
der for the ensuing Catastrophe.

*Interea campis, nemoris sacer horror Achai,
Martius erigitur serpens, tractuque soluto
Immanem sese vehit, ac post terga relinquit.
Livida fax oculis : tumidi stat in ore veneni
Spuma virens ; ter lingua vibrat, terna agmina adunci
Dentis, & aurata crudelis Gloria frontis.* L. 4. Theb.

Mean while the terror of th' *Achean* brake,
 Huge, monstrous, vast, uprose the princely snake;
 Along the ground, th' unrav'ling folds he draws,
 A pois'nous foam begrims his clotted jaws:
 Fierce from his eyes the blue effulgence flows;
 His ample teeth expand their triple rows;
 His length'ned Tongue in fiery threat'nings roll'd,
 And his high brandish'd crest was crown'd with waving
 Gold. T—rs.

There are many other beautiful comparisons in this writer. I shall only mention another, which the Reader may compare with an admirable one in *Lucretius* of the same kind.

*Non secus ac primo fraudatum lacte juvencum
 Cui trepida vires, & solus ab ubere sanguis,
 Seu fera, seu duras avexit pastor ad aras;
 Nunc Vallem spoliata parens, nunc flumina questu,
 Nunc armenta movet, vacuosque interrogat agros.
 Tunc piget ire domum, mæstoque novissima campo
 Exit, & oppositas impastâ avertitur herbas.* L. 2. *Theb.*

So when some beast or shepherd from the lawn,
 Has drag'd his mother's hope the tender fawn,
 The lonely parent climbs the desert rocks,
 Or seeks the straggler 'mongst the neighb'ring flocks.
 Thro' the deaf wild she waits her plaintive tale,
 Asks ev'ry stream, and questions ev'ry vale:
 Then sadly slow walks o'er the untasted grain,
 And faint, reluctant, pensive, leaves the plain. T—rs.

His descriptions are not less poetical, as we have already seen in some instances. I have not ranged them together in order, thinking it might be more agreeable to meet with them occasionally, as they happen to fall in with the course of these Remarks.

It has been already observed, that he is *Virgil's* profest imitator and admirer. I will not therefore dwell long on this head, a few hints of it will suffice. In the *Episode* of *Hypsipile*, where she relates her adventures to *Adrastus*, she says *Bacchus* appeared to direct her whither to guide her father in that bloody night, when all the *Lemnian*
Women

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women slew their husbands and all their relations of the male sex, the King of the Island being the only man preserved by his daughter *Hypsipile's* piety. *Bacchus*, as he left her, is said to have marked his way through the air by a long trail of fire.

— *Ita fatus in aëra rursus*
Solvitur ; & nostrum visum arcessentibus umbris
Mitis iter longa claravit limite flumina. L. 5. *Theb.*

So spoke the God ; and heav'nward took his flight ;
 While ambient clouds conceal him from our sight,
 And drag along the skies a radiant trail of light. T - - rs. }

His appearance is much the same, with a bright splendor.

— *Multa cum luce refulsit,* Ibid.
 So *Venus* appears to *Æneas* in *Virgil*.

— *Pura per noctem in luce refulsit.* L. 2. *Æneid.*
 And in her departure.

— *Avertens rosea cervice refulsit.* L. 1. *Æneid.*

THE description of that fatal sleep, the night the men of *Lemnos* were all killed, is also imitated from *Virgil's* when *Troy* was taken, and is not inferior, if it has not surpassed that in the *Æneid*.

— *Prima decrescunt murmura noctis,*
Cum consanguinei mixtus caligine lati
Rore madens Stygio morituram amplectitur urbem
Somnus, & implacido fundit gravia otia cornu,
Secernitque viros. — L. 5. *Theb.*

Now the still night in awful silence rode,
 When lo ! from Hell arose the sleepy God :
 His wings all wet with *Stygian* dew enclose
 The dying city ; he the poison throws,
 In cruel plenty round their destin'd heads,
 And singles out the men. —

IF *Venus* in *Virgil* pleads for the *Trojans*, *Bacchus* here intercedes for his native City *Thebes*, and *STATIUS* has given *Jupiter* the same tender regard for him, as in the
Æneid

Æneid he discovers for *Venus*. From *Jupiter's* answer to *Bacchus* on this occasion, compared to what he does elsewhere, it appears, as if *Jupiter* himself were subject to the laws of fate: But in reality, these are found to be no other than the fixed, and immutable determinations of his own will. Here he tells that God, that he does not act in compliance to *Juno's* caprice, but conformable to the unalterable order of destiny. But in the beginning of the *Thebaid*, we find him positively declaring to the Gods in Council, his resolution of destroying the Royal Families of *Thebes* and *Argos*, as a punishment for their crimes: And perhaps the fate of the Stoics themselves was no other than this in reality.

STATIUS has also imitated *Homer* in many places; and he seems particularly to have had an eye to *Helen's* informing the old men on the walls of *Troy*, as she is there described in the *Iliad*, of the character of the several Princes in the *Grecian* Camp: For in the seventh Book, *Antigone*, Sister to *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, appears standing on a tower, attended by an old Officer, who had been *Laius's* Armour-bearer; who at her desire, gives an account of the Allies that came to assist the *Thebans*. Though some circumstances are altered, it is easy to imagine he took his plan from the *Iliad*. Nor will any one condemn this conduct of his, such imitations being not only very allowable but commendable, when made with art, and happily and fitly introduced.

LET us now enter a little more particularly into the character of some of the Heroes of this Poem. To begin with *Tydeus*: Nothing can equal his intrepidity, when he was attacked by surprize, by fifty men, that *Eteocles* (whom he had provoked by his haughty behaviour during his Embassy to him from *Polynices*) secretly dispatched after him from *Thebes*, to put him to death, When he comes to discover their numbers, he turns pale with anger at so base an enterprize, and by the slaughter he makes amongst them, soon convinces them of their Error, who expected easily to overpower one man with their numbers. To secure himself from behind, he climbs up a high Mountain, and from thence hurls a prodigious fragment of a Rock at his pursuers, which the strongest yolk
of

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of Oxen could hardly draw. This likewise is imitated from *Ajax* in *Homer*, and the Poet has endeavoured to express the action in his numbers. The Spondees of the first line express his contention in tearing it away from the Rock: The beginning of the third breaks it off with a crack; the best of the third and the fourth, heave it up, and poise it in the air.

*Saxum ingens, quod vix plena cervice gementes
Vertere humo, murisque valent inferre juvenci,
Rupibus avellit, dein toto sanguine nixus
Sustinet, immanem quarens librare ruinam.* L. 2. Theb.

To soften the improbability of so prodigious a victory as this, which *Tydeus* here gained over the fifty *Thebans*, who were all slain to one man, whom he forced to live and bear the fatal message of this misfortune to *Thebes*, the Poet discovers *Minerva*, who is said to have secretly protected and strengthened him during the engagement, and reproves him afterwards for vainly ascribing the success to his own valour.

AND NOW, *Jupiter*, finding things in a fit disposition for the war on both sides, who were on this occasion sufficiently animated against each other, sends for *Mars*, whose coming is described full of terror; and the short description of his shield in the last line, has something sublime in it.

—— Ille furens

*Bistonas, & Geticas populatus sedibus urbes
Turbidus athereos currus agitabat ad arces.
Fulmine cristatum galea jubar, armaque in auro
Tristia, terrificis monstrorum animata figuris;
Lux rubet, & solem longe ferit amulus orbis.*

L. 3. Theb.

He from the spoils of ravag'd *Thracia* flies,
His furious chariot thunders thro' the skies;
His blazing helm the wavy lightning crown'd,
Emboss'd upon his arms grim monsters frown'd;
And *Phæbus*, as he pass'd, surpriz'd beheld,
The rival splendor of his flaming shield. T — rs.

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At length, when all was prepared on both sides, and the overtures of peace interrupted, as we shall see by and by, the Army of the Allies being now before *Thebes*, *Jupiter*, to hasten the engagement, once more dispatches *Mercury* to fetch the God of war. On this occasion the Poet has presented the Reader with the following description of his Palace.

*Cingitur adverso domus inassueta sub Æmo ;
Ferre compago laterum, ferro arcæ teguntur
Limina, ferratis incumbunt tecta columnis.
Leditur adversum Phœbi jubar, ipsaque sedem
Lux timet, & dirus contristat sidera fulgor.
Digna loco statio : primis salit Impetus amens
E foribus, cacumque Nefas, Iraque rubentes,
Exanguisque Metus, occultisque ensibus astant
Insidia, geminumque tenens Discordia ferrum.
Innumerus strepit aula minis, tristissima Virtus
Stat medio, latusque Furor, vultuque cruento
Mors armata sedet, bellorum solus in aris
Sanguis, & incensus qui raptus ab urbibus ignis.
Terrarum exuvie circum, & fastigia templi
Capta insignibant gentes, calataque ferro
Fragmina portarum, bellatriceque carina,
Et vacui curvus, protritaque curribus ora.
Pene etiam geitus, adeo vis omnis & omnem
Vulnus ; ubique ipsum, sed nusquam ore remisso,
Cernere erat, talem divina Mulciber arte
Ediderat.* —————

L. 7. Theb.

Encompals'd by th' *Æmonian* hills there stands
Mars's Iron Palace, rais'd by *Vulcan's* hands.
Reflected from the walls the sun-beams glare,
And shoot like light'ning thro' the red'ned air.
Just in the Portal furious Rage appears,
Blind Mischief, Anger red, and panic Fears ;
Hard by base Treachery her dagger hides,
And Discord that with two edg'd sword divides.
Loud threats and murmurs thro' the courts resound,
And mournful Virtue in the midst is found.
Mad Fury stands at hand with horrid joy,
And Death besmear'd with blood sits ready to destroy.
With

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With Fire of ravag'd towns his Altars smoke,
 And human victims burn, when mortals him invoke.
 The various spoils of war the Roof adorn,
 And trophies are on ev'ry pillar worn.
 Ev'ry calamity was there exprest,
 Each wound, and ev'n each sigh that heaves the breast;
 So well the *Lemnian* Artist had convey'd
 The many paths that to the center led;
 That still the *Thracian* God stood full in view,
 All saw the same fierce countenance and hue,
 That no kind change, no mitigation knew.

}
}

Mars begins to execute his father's commands, by alarming the Army with a false terror of the *Thebans* approach. This, agreeably to the true Genius of Epick Poetry, becomes a Person, and is described as one of the dreadful attendants of that God.

— Non alter anhelos

*Insinuare metus, animumque avertere veris
 Aptior, innumera monstro vocesque, manusque,
 Et facies quacunque libet; bonus omnia credi
 Auctor, & horrificis lymphare incurfibus urbes.*

L. 7. Theb;

None fitter specious errors to impart,
 Awe coward faith, and chill the tim'rous heart.
 A thousand different shapes the fiend surround,
 And vary at his will, each look, and hand, and sound.
 Fierce at his call the madding nations arm,
 While rash credulity obsequious hears the alarm. T—rs.

IT being more artful to let the war break out from some trivial occasion, in *Virgil*, the accidental killing of a favourite stag as *Ascanius* was a hunting, brings the *Trojans* and *Latins* to an engagement, which breaks off all thoughts of peace on both sides. In *STATIUS*, who never fails to imitate him, *Jocasta*, who was come to *Adrastus's* camp with overtures of peace, had almost prevailed with *Polynices* to go with her to *Thebes*, and try by fair means to persuade his Brother to surrender him the Crown; when two *Tigers*, that had formerly drawn *Bacchus's* Chariot in his *Indian* Triumph, and on that account were held sacred by the *Thebans*, breaking out of the woods,

com-

committed some ravages in the camp of the Allies, for which they were at length slain by *Acontus*, just under the walls of *Thebes*, whither that *Arcadian* had pursued them. Upon this, *Phceus*, who had observed what had passed, being a zealous worshipper of *Bacchus*, a Man of note in the city, sallied out upon him, who having no other arms but the Javelins he had slain the *Tigers* with, was soon overpowered and killed. This adventure making a noise, alarmed both parties; so that the conference broke up in confusion, and *Jocasta* getting with some difficulty, through the tumult, returns to *Thebes* without success; and both sides rush on to battle in the utmost confusion and disorder, but full of fury and animosity against each other.

THE Prophet *Amphiaræus* being doomed to fall in the first engagement, *Apollo*, to honour his servant, having made him victorious in the Chariot-race at the Games, and now at length obtained of *Mars* in his favour, that he should not fall by a mortal hand, here in the heat of the engagement, after many gallant actions, the Earth opens and swallows him up. The God, who could not avert his fate, deferred it to the last; and when *Hypseus*, a valiant *Theban*, observing the great slaughter *Amphiaræus* made among them, aimed his *Javelin* at him, *Apollo* averts the blow, which piercing the Charioteer, he falls, and the God takes up the reins in his stead, personating the deceased. At last the fatal hour approaching, after some converse, wherein the Prophet discovers his resignation, and the other his concern, *Apollo* is forced to leave him to his destiny; upon this *Amphiaræus* is immediately precipitated into Hell, to the great astonishment of *Pluto*, and all the infernal inhabitants; and 'tis not without some difficulty that the God hears his prayer, and is appeased; whom the Poet has artfully represented as uneasy to find this softness in his nature.

Accipit ille preces, indignaturque moveri :

Ut Leo Massyli cum lux stetit obvia ferri,

Tunc iras, tunc arma citat; si decidat hostis

Ire super satis est, vitamque relinquere victo.

L. 8. Thebi

At

At length the God reluctant grants his prayer,
And scorning mean revenge, forgives the seer :
So when the Lion views the glittering spear,
Collecting all his rage he pants for war ;
But if the foe lie prostrate on the plain,
The wretch escapes secure in his disdain.

Adrastus being the only one of the seven Generals who was not doomed to perish in the war, the Poet has taken care to give the Reader a hint of it. At the celebration of the Games, when the several exercises were over, that Prince was desired by the other Chiefs, to make some part of the general diversion, and crown their sports : He consents, and shoots an arrow, which recoiling back from the tree, falls at his feet. This circumstance is manifestly imitated from the *Æneid* ; where, in the fifth Book, *Virgil* has introduced *Aceses* shooting an Arrow, which takes fire in the Air, portending the burning of the Fleet by the Trojan women, which soon ensued. The passage of STATIUS runs thus :

*Campum emensa brevi fatalis ab arbore tacta,
Horrendum visu, per quas modo fugerat auras
Venit arundo retro ; versumque a sine tenorem
Pertulit, & nota juxta ruit ora Pharetra.*

— *Penitus latet exitus ingens*

Monstratumque nefas : uni remeabile bellum

Et tristes Domino spondebat arundo recursus. L. 6. Theb.

The fatal Arrow, to their great surprize,
Back from the destin'd tree rebounding flies,
And falling by the well known quiver lies. }

What this portentous Prodigy declares,
None then cou'd guess, that him alone the wars
Shou'd spare, and grant a sorrowful return ;
And let *Adrastus* live the others loss to mourn.

IN the eighth Book, *Tydeus* being mortally wounded, not contented with having slain *Menalippus*, who had given him this wound, calls out to his friends to bring him his Enemy's head. This *Capaneus* immediately did, and now *Tydeus* gluts his revenge with a most savage piece of cruelty, barbarously gnawing and tearing it in pieces. But this

this inhumanity does not go unpunished : For though the Poet, to alleviate the heinousness of so cruel an action, has ascribed it to *Typhione's* instigation ; *Tydeus* loses that life, which *Minerva*, with much intreaty, had obtained for him from her Father ; and as she was returning with the favourable Grant, she discovers the Heroe greedily satiating his revenge, as we have described him : The GodJests, shocked at the horror of such a Scene, turns away, and leaves him to fall a just victim to his own cruelty. I have related these circumstances to justify *STATIUS* to the Reader, who will no doubt, observe, that although he seems to have kept close to history in this matter, he has done poetical justice. This was the more necessary to remark, because without this additional circumstance of *Tydeus's* suffering for his barbarous revenge, his behaviour seems too cruel almost to be related, and consequently by no means answering the great end of Epick Poetry, Instruction.

THE death of *Hippomedon* in the next Book, is brought to pass by the River *Ismenos's* swelling with the number of dead bodies of both parties, occasioned by the eager pursuit the *Argives* made of the *Thebans*, that were passing the River in triumph with *Tydeus's* dead Body to carry it to *Thebes*. *Hippomedon* had for some time bravely defended it against them, till a fury, disguised like one of *Adrastus's* attendants, is sent to call him away upon a false alarm of that Prince's danger. Whilst the Heroe flies to his rescue, the victorious *Thebans* bear away his friend's body : Discovering the deceit, he hastens back, and eagerly pursuing the Enemy to recover it, he comes up with them, as they were fording the River : Hereupon a sharp engagement ensues, and great numbers fall on both sides : The stream swelling with the number of the slain, overflows, and violently bearing down trunks of trees and planks upon *Hippomedon*, as he was with undaunted resolution attacking the *Thebans* in the midst of the River, he is thereby mortally wounded and bruised ; and now being no longer able to resist the torrent, he is thrown half dead on the shore, where he is made an end of by the *Theban* darts. This is poetically contrived to befall him, for having slain young *Crenaus* of the Enemies party, who was grandson of the River *Ismenos*. This transporting the God with
grief

grief and rage, he rolls down his waters with violence, and tearing up all that was in his way, dashes them against *Hippomedon*, the Author of his affliction. *Juno* is introduced as interesting herself in his preservation; but all that she could obtain for him by her intreaties, was, that he should not perish ignobly in the River; for *Jupiter* causing the waters to retire, the Heroe is cast ashore, and there dies like a Soldier by the hands of the Enemies.

THE tenth Book begins with another Machine. *Juno* being moved by the prayers of the *Argive* women for the safety of their husbands and children in the war; and well pleased with their piety and offerings, sends for *Iris*, bidding her seek the abode of the God of sleep, and command him that night to spread his heavy mantle over the *Theban* camp. Hereupon the Poet has taken occasion to entertain his Reader with the following elegant and full description of the Palace, its situation, and all the attendants of the lazy God.

Stat super occidua nebulosa cacumina noctis
Æthiopaſque alios, nulli penetrabilis aſtro
Lucus iners, ſubterque cavis grave rupibus antrum
It vacuum in montem, qua deſidis atria Somni,
Securumque larem ſegnīs natura locavit.
Limen opaca Quies & pigra Oblivīa ſervant,
Et nunquam vigili torpens Ignavia vultus.
Oīa veſtibulo, preſſiſque ſilentia pennis
Muta ſedent, abiguntque truces a culmine ventos;
Et ramos errare vetant, & murmura demunt
Alitibus; non hic pelagi, licet omnia clamens
Littora, non illic cœli fragor, ipſe profundis
Vallibus effugiens, ſpelunca proximus amnis
Saxa inter ſcopuloſque tacet; nigrantia circa
Armenta, omne ſolo recubat pecus, & nova marcent
Germina, terrarumque inclināt ſpiritus herbas.
Hic comes in requiem vergens labor, eſt ubi Baccho,
Eſt ubi Martigena ſocium pulvinar amorī
Obtinet; interius tectum in penetralibus altis
Et cum Morte jacet, nullique ea trīſtis imago.
Ipſe autem vacuus curis, humentia ſubter
Antra, ſoporifero ſtipatus flore, tapetas
Incubat, exhalant veſtes, & corpore pigro

Strata

*Strata calent ; supraque torum niger efflat anhelos
 Ore vapor ; manus hac fusos a tempore lato
 Sustentat crines : hac cornu oblita remisit.
 Adsunt innumero circum vaga somnia vultu ;
 Vera simul falsis, permixtaque tristia blandis.
 Noctis opaca cohors, trabibusque aut possibus hærent,
 Aut tellure jacent, tenuis qui circuit aulam
 Invalidusque nitor, primosque hortantia somnos
 Languida succiduis expirant lumina flammis.*

Lib. 10. Theb.

Beyond the confines of the western Moors,
 Whose ling'ring fogs obscure the sickly shores,
 Stands a dull grove ; no subtle beams of light
 Pierce the thick darkness of the impervious night ;
 Deep yawns a den, which ambient rocks surround,
 Form'd by the vacant concave of the ground.
 Here lazy Nature Sleep's Asylum chose,
 And fix'd th' eternal mansions of repose.
 Sloth and Oblivion idle sisters wait
 Before the entrance of the sacred gate.
 Silence far off repels the intruding breeze,
 And stills the chatt'ring birds, and rustling trees :
 Not all the roarings of the boiling deep,
 Or thunder's rage disturb the peaceful sleep.
 A stream along the Cavern's rocky sides,
 Without one gurgling murmur smoothly glides ;
 Round lie the sable herds ; and all around,
 A blighting vapour steaming from the ground,
 Wide o'er the cave its drowzy influence pours,
 Withers the new born herb, and blasts the rising flow'rs.
 Within the dewy grot a couch was spread,
 Where free'd from care the God supine was laid,
 And drooping poppies faded round his head.
 Beneath his lazy limbs the carpets sweat ;
 And from his mouth exhales a sultry heat :
 His hair dishevell'd by one hand is born,
 T'other droops down unmindful of the horn.
 A train of Dreams, nights black attendants wait,
 Hang on the walls, or flutter round the gate ;

These

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These the gay shape of flatt'ring pleasures wear,
 And these the fullen visage of despair,
 Some true, some false, in various forms appear. }
 A lamp scarce breaking thro' the genuine gloom,
 Scatters a dubious glimmering thro' the room ;
 Trembling a while the feeble taper glows,
 Then sinks expiring, and invites repose. T—rs.

UPON the whole, we may conclude STATIUS to be among Epick Poets, what *Alexander* is said to have been among Heroes ; he had great virtues, and as great vices ; and this work has some egregious faults, as well as many remarkable beauties, of each of which a fuller account has, I think, been given in the course of these observations, than what has been hitherto done by any of the Critics.

STRADA, in his Prolusions, has placed STATIUS on the highest top of *Parnassus* ; thereby intimating the strength of his Genius, and the lofty Spirit of his Style ; which indeed is generally supported by a bold and lively expression, and full flowing numbers. His manner therefore, resembles rather the martial strut of a general, and the magnificence of a triumph, than the majestick port and true grandour of a Prince, which better suits the inimitable character of *Virgil's* Style. As a Soldier cannot easily lay aside the roughness of his character, neither can STATIUS descend from the pomp of language and loftiness of numbers, when his subject requires it. His Heroes know no pity, as they know no fear ; and tho' *Aeneas* and his Fleet feared *Polyphemus*, the undaunted *Tydeus* makes nothing of fifty the bravest fellows of the *Theban* Troops, that fall on him at once. Indeed it is our Poet's fault, to stretch the marvellous sometimes to the improbable, making his Heroes act on some occasions like Knight Errants.

SETTING this aside, we find the Passions painted in the strongest and truest colours ; the speeches vehement and pathetick ; the descriptions full and exact ; the comparisons lively and well drawn ; and the Metaphors bold and shining. Your attention is always kept awake ; nay, rather the many surprizing circumstances croud in so thick upon the mind, that it finds itself almost at a loss how

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how to take them all in, as he represents them ; so far is the Poet from letting the subject grow dull and tiresome in his hands : In short, it is evident STATIUS wanted neither genius, elevation of thought, copiousness of invention, nor force of fancy : Yet the *Thebaid* wants those most amiable graces, which are so much the more difficult to attain, as they seem natural and unaffected, and are the characteristick beauties of fine writing. For though an Author, like *Prometheus*, may steal fire from Heaven to animate his works, as he did his clay ; if he cannot with *Juno* borrow *Venus's* girdle to give them a graceful lustre, they will in the end, like *Prometheus's* man, though extraordinary and beautiful, prove both faulty and mortal.

BUT before we conclude STATIUS's life, it may be expected, that some mention should be made of the *Achilleid*, though an imperfect work.

I THINK it will suffice, to observe of it in general, that by what can be guessed from the two remaining Books of this Poem, the design seems to have been but indifferently laid, and the Reader was in danger of being led through a long historical narration from the beginning to the end of *Achilles's* life. He was sure of great helps from *Homer* on this subject ; but that perhaps might rather turn to his disadvantage upon the comparison. After all, it is impossible to judge how he would have executed the whole from the beginning of it which we have ; only we can perceive a greater smoothness in the numbers, and an ease in the Style, which the *Thebaid* sometimes wanted. Indeed that Poem with all its defects, was enough to exhaust a Poet of a greater Genius than STATIUS was master of ; and he doubtless, would have acted more advisedly to sit down and correct and polish that work, rather than undertake a second Poem, such as the *Achilleid* ought to have been, if he had lived to finish it, and been able to go through the Task.

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